GREAT TRANSITION INITIATIVE
TOWARD A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION AND PRAXIS

Can Human Solidarity Globalize?

GTI Forum
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Creating a decent civilization in this century depends on human identity expanding to the scale of the planet. Pervasive divisions leave many pessimistic that this can happen. Still, in the course of social evolution, the circle of identity has ballooned from clans and tribes to nations and beyond, while science has confirmed the key role of cooperation.

Now, the contemporary condition of shared destiny urges a global locus for institutions, reciprocity, and empathy. Richard Falk's opening essay reflects on a "politics of impossibility" for realizing this imperative. Two panels weigh in, the first with a range of theoretical perspectives and the second with pragmatic ways forward.

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GREAT TRANSITION INITIATIVE
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Global Solidarity: Toward a Politics of Impossibility

Richard Falk

The Imprisoned Imagination

As the COVID-19 pandemic slowly subsides, it is not clear what lessons will be drawn by political leaders and publics around the world. Entrenched power, wealth, and conventional wisdom have demonstrated the overwhelming resilience of the global order even while the virus continues to ravage many national societies. Despite some notable exceptions revealing extremes of solidarity or discrimination, efficient competence or irresponsible partisanship, this reversion to the status quo occurred at all levels of social organization from the village to the world, especially the sovereign state.

For the most part, rich and powerful governments used their leverage to corner the vaccine market, allowing a draconian market-driven logic to drive distribution that privileged intellectual property rights and technical knowhow, leading to grotesque disparities in vaccine access between the peoples of the North and those of the South. It has become a truism to observe that no country will be safe from the virus, or its variants, until the entire world is vaccinated. Never had the self-interest of the species so vividly and concretely coincided with an ethos of global solidarity. And yet such an ethos did not materialize. We must search for explanations and correctives.

A people-first approach to the global health emergency would have transcended statist and profit-making domains at all phases of COVID prevention and treatment, and situated them within a global commons framework. Such an approach might have dramatically heightened prospects for the social transformation at the heart of the Great Transition and would at least have restored some confidence that the human species, at least in an emergency, is capable of meeting the challenges of the Anthropocene. As the pandemic instead revealed the resounding strength of

statist structures and private sector interests, it seems necessary to acknowledge this tragic interlude as but one more lost opportunity for the human species to awaken from its prolonged slumber before it is too late.

To some extent, the failure has been masked by the newfound generosity of some countries as the sense of a world health emergency receded and such countries' virus supplies exceeded national demands. In a spirit of philanthropy rather than solidarity, shipments of the virus to countries in need were made, recipients often selected on the basis of pragmatic diplomatic advantage. Perhaps charity towards those less fortunate can be considered a weak form of solidarity, even if filtered by political leaders motivated by selfish national interests.

More than ever, we must face the question: Can the peoples of Earth, doomed to share a ravaged planet, learn to live together in ways that encourage our species to flourish in an emergent future? The concept of a Great Transition invites us to reimagine such a future by exploring what might be possible, which requires an initial willingness of the imagination to let go of the trappings of the present without engaging in wishful thinking. Such a balancing act is not as straightforward as it sounds. What was science fiction a generation ago is increasingly entering the realm of the possible, and even the feasible in the near future. It is an opportune time to explore the seedlings of possibility sprouting around us, inscribing a more hopeful mapping of the human future in the prevailing collective consciousness.

On What is Possible

"*Some men see things as they are and say 'why?' I dream of things that never were and ask 'why not?'*" — George Bernard Shaw

We must start by rejecting conventional foreclosures of the imagination. We cannot accept that politics is "the art of the possible" if the "possible" remains circumscribed by the play of current forces of stasis, confining the idea of change to policy shifts at the margin or—at the most ambitious—elite-driven national revolutions. The structures of state and market remain essentially untouched and continue to run the show. As long as these constraints are not removed, the Great Transition will be stymied. The first challenge is to find effective ways to subvert and transform these primordial structures. Meeting this challenge starts with liberating the mind from ingrained conventions that solidify the ideological biases of modernity.

If we carefully consider our own lives, we are likely to appreciate how many epochal public happenings had been previously deemed "impossible," or only seemed possible after the fact. A potent illustration of the tyranny of a status quo bias is Winston Churchill's derisive attitude toward Gandhi during the early stages of the rise of Indian nationalism. Dismissive of any threat to Indian colonial rule, Churchill described Gandhi as a "malignant subversive fanatic" and "a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace." The great British war leader displayed his attachment to a Western understanding of power that had little insight into historical circumstances vulnerable to anti-colonial nationalism.

Similar patterns of the seemingly impossible happening are evident in contemporary history, such as the peaceful ending of the Cold War followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union; the American defeat in the Vietnam War despite overwhelming military superiority; China's half-century rise from mass impoverishment and backwardness to prime geopolitical challenger, including threatening Western mastery of innovative technology such as AI, G5 connectivity, robotics, and genetic engineering; and the abandonment of apartheid by South Africa in the face of nonviolent resistance from within and anti-apartheid solidarity from without.

What these examples demonstrate is that our understanding of the scope of the possible has been artificially circumscribed in ways that protect the interests of various elites in the maintenance of the status quo, making it seem reckless and futile to mount structural challenges however justified they may be morally or bio-politically. Such foreclosures of imagined futures have been key to the protection of institutions like slavery, discrimination, and warfare but often remain limited in scope to specific locales or policy areas. The uniqueness of the Anthropocene is to restrict the possible to unsustainable and dysfunctional structures and modes of behavior, while bringing to a head the question of finding more viable ways of organizing life on the planet and living together in a manner that protects future generations.

Such foreclosures of the imagination inflict damage both by shortening our temporal vision and by constraining our understanding of useful knowledge. Despite what science and rationality tell us about the future, our leaders—and, indeed, most of us—give scant practical attention to what is needed to preserve and improve the life prospects for future generations. Given the scope and

depth of the challenges, *responsible anthropocentrism* in the twenty-first century should incorporate a sense of urgency to temporal axes of concern. We now need a "politics of the impossible," a necessary utopianism that stands as an avowal of the attainability of the Great Transition. We must begin by interrogating the semantics of the possible as a cultural, political, economic, and ideological construct binding humanity to a system that is increasingly bio-politically self-destructive for the species and its natural habitat.

Closely connected to this foreclosure of our temporal vision has been a scientifically conditioned epistemology asserting the limits of useful knowledge. Within the most influential epistemic communities, an Enlightenment ideology prevails that sets boundaries limiting productive intellectual inquiry. The positive legacies of the Enlightenment in grounding knowledge on scientifically verified evidence rather than cultural superstitions and religiously guided prejudice and dogma are real and important, but there have been costs as well. Notably, a bias against subjectivity discourages normative inquiry and advocacy, which is dismissed as "non-scientific." The noted Confucian scholar Tu Wei-Ming has powerfully criticized the impact of what he calls "instrumental rationalism" on the capacity of Western civilization to embrace the value of empathy, which he views as integral to human dignity and humane governance.

We need a moral epistemology to achieve responsible anthropocentrism, exploring right and wrong, and distinguishing between desirable and diminished futures, not as matters of opinion, but as the underpinnings of "normative knowledge." Universities, split into specialized disciplines and privileging work within the Enlightenment paradigm, are largely oblivious to the need for a holistic understanding of the complexities and solidarities with which we must grapple in order for humanity to extricate itself from present structures that divide and fragment the human experience, strangling possibilities.

It may be helpful to distinguish "the feasible," "the necessary," and "the desirable" to further illuminate "the pursuit of the impossible." In short, "the feasible" from the perspective of the status quo seems incapable, under the best of circumstances, of achieving "the necessary" and "the desirable." We will need to pursue "the desirable" to mobilize the capabilities needed to engage effectively in realizing "the necessary."

If existing conditions continue, the bio-political destiny of the human species seems destined for dark times. In the past, before the Nuclear Age, we could ignore the future and address the material, security, and spiritual needs of bounded communities, and success or failure had no ramifications for larger systems. Now we must find ways to attend to the whole, or the parts will perish and likely destroy one another in the process. St. Francis found some fitting words for such an emancipatory path: "Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

Traditional Worldviews

When seeking alternative worldviews not defined by states, empires, or markets, many have turned toward the pre-modern realities and cosmologies of native peoples. Recovering that pre-modern worldview might be instructive in certain respects, but it is not responsive to the practical contours of contemporary liberation. Retreat to the pre-modern past is not an option, except as a result of a planetary calamity.

Instead of the realities of localism and tribal community, our way forward needs to engage globalism and human community, and to affirm that such strivings fall within the realm of possibility. We must reimagine a sense of our place in the cosmos so that it becomes our standpoint: a patriotism for humanity in which the whole becomes greater than the part, and the part is no longer the dominant organizing principle of life on the planet. Understanding the interplay of parts and wholes is a helpful place to begin this transformative journey. Parts are not only enclaves of space on world maps, but the separate identities of race, gender, class, belief, and habitat. An ethos of human solidarity would not eliminate differences but would complement them with a sense of commonality while sustaining their separate and distinctive identities. Such an ethos would generate new modes of being for addressing the challenges of transition.

For this to happen, a sense of global solidarity must take over the commanding heights of the imagination rather than continue to inhabit echo chambers hidden in underground hiding places far from the domains of policy formation.

Global Solidarity Must Rise as the Great Transition Unfolds

Without global solidarity, the structural features of the status quo will remain too deeply entrenched to allow a more cooperative, peaceful, just, and ecologically mindful world to emerge. Such a benevolent future is blocked by the prevailing consciousness in government and corporate board rooms, a paralyzing blend of ignorance, denial, incrementalism, and most of all, an unconscious respect for and deference to fragmenting boundaries that make global solidarity seem "impossible" to achieve. Assuming the paralysis has been overcome by an enhanced conception of the possible, then what?

Global solidarity would benefit humanity functionally, ethically, ecologically, and spiritually. Its functional role is most immediately obvious from a problem-solving perspective. Whether we consider vaccine diplomacy, climate change, or nuclear weapons, it becomes clear that only on the basis of human solidarity will we treat vaccines in the midst of epidemics or pandemics as part of the global commons rather than as a source of national diplomacy, international property rights, and pharmaceutical profits. With climate change, whether we will manage a displacement of national and financial interests on the basis of general global well-being depends on achieving an unprecedented level of global solidarity. Similarly, with nuclear weapons, will we find the courage to live without such weaponry within a security framing that represents the well-being of people rather than the shortsighted hegemony of a few governments and their self-regarding societal elites?

Higher measures of global solidarity would enhance the quality and nature of global governance. Even if the defining unit of solidarity remained the sovereign state rather than the human being, a sense of global citizenship could underpin a much more robust United Nations whose membership sought shared goals proclaimed by its Charter rather than the competition that has been its dominant experience, especially on issues of peace and security. The world economy would become much less tied to militarized forms of security, freeing resources for peace-building processes. From a broadening sense of global identity we could also expect a much more effective approach to biodiversity, preserving, for example, the rainforests and polar regions as indispensable aspects of our common heritage. And as heightened empathy would accompany global

solidarity, there would be a greater tendency to take human suffering seriously, including poverty, displacement, and the victimization that follows from natural disasters and political strife.

Perhaps the greatest benefits of global solidarity would be felt ethically and spiritually. We can presume that the collective self of a world exhibiting high levels of global solidarity would shift loyalties and identities. The enmities of difference (race, nation, religion, gender, class) would lose their primacy, replaced by a different calibration of "otherness"—perhaps with the cosmos regarded as the great other of the earth. It seems reasonable to anticipate the emergence of a less metaphysical religious consciousness inspired by the greater harmonies on earth and a growing experience of cosmic awe as knowledge of this larger realm spreads and is reinforced by mind-broadening experience such as space tourism.

Do We Have the Time?

An ethos of global solidarity led an idealistic group of jurists in 1976 to draft the Declaration of the Rights of People to be implemented by a Permanent Peoples Tribunal, and many inquiries have been carried out since to hold states and their leaders *symbolically* accountable for violations of international law. People throughout the world have organized many civic initiatives in defense of nature and of peace.

Recently, Bolivia and Ecuador enacted a text devoted to the Rights of Mother Nature. New Zealand passed a law recognizing that animals are sentient beings with a legal entitlement to decent treatment. A movement is underway to regard "wild rivers" as subjects of rights, prohibiting the construction of hydro-electric dams. Civil society groups in Europe and South America have formed the International Rights of Nature Tribunal to protect various natural habitats from predatory human behavior.

Within the wider orbit of UN activities, many quiet undertakings involving health, children, food, cultural heritage, and environment proceed in an atmosphere of global solidarity interrupted by only occasional intrusions from the more conflictual arenas of the Security Council and General Assembly. There are no vetoes, and partisanship is kept at a minimum.

Gestating within the cultural bosom of world civilizations and world religions have been subversive ideas of global solidarity. Philosophic and religious affirmations of unity in ideas of

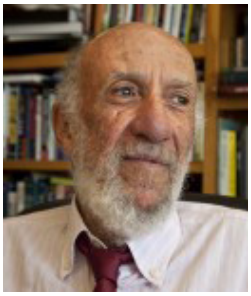
"cosmopolitanism" have garnered increasing numbers of adherents. Growing attachments to nature proclaimed in many forms gives rise to loyalties that find no place on world maps or national boundaries. Fears of future catastrophe by way of nuclear war and ecosystem collapse expand awareness that present arrangements are not sustainable, thereby making many persons receptive to creating other more inclusive forms of organizing life on the planet.

Transition is not off in the distance or only in dreamscapes or science fiction imaginaries; it is happening around us if we only learn to open our eyes and hearts to the possibilities now emerging.

Concluding Thoughts

We cannot know the future, but we can know that the great enhancement of global solidarity would underpin the future we need and desire. Although this enhancement may currently seem "impossible," we know that the impossible can happen when the historical moment is conducive. This century of interdependent risks and hopes has germinated the possibility of human solidarity globalizing. We know what is to be done, the value of struggling on behalf of our beliefs, and the urgency of the quest. This is the time to dedicate our hopes and indeed our lives to making the Great Transition happen, that is, learning to live in accord with the ethical and ecological precepts of *responsible anthropocentrism*.

About the Author



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Panel 1:
Debating the Prospects

A Sisyphean Task

David Barash

Few developments—if any—would be more desirable than global solidarity: not only among human beings but between our species and the rest of the natural world. (Given what seems the inevitable rise and elaboration of AI, perhaps we should add a benevolent solidarity between Homo sapiens and our technological creations as well.) Moreover, there are few if any thinkers whom I have admired more or with whom I have found myself more in personal solidarity than Richard Falk. At the same time, I would like to suggest a perspective that, although not at odds with Falk's, provides another way of metabolizing his inspiring call for a "politics of the impossible."

I recently revisited Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance" with my grandson, and was especially struck by a rhetorical question posed by those benevolent pirates, namely "For what, we ask, is life without a touch of Poetry in it?" There is indeed poetry in a call for pursuing any impossible dream, all the more so when that dream offers the prospect of achieving change that is not only desirable but also necessary. Such rhetoric is inspiring and is accordingly well represented in much fine poetry, such as Tennyson's "come my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a better world," and Browning's "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" Poetry is indispensable, as are lofty goals, and the former may well be a prerequisite for pursuing the latter, especially if those goals are not only lofty but (let's face it) verging on the literally impossible.

And so, at the risk of being perceived as a skunk at a garden party, I wish to offer a somewhat different, albeit complementary view. "Realism" has achieved a deservedly negative resonance among those of us who aspire to a future more akin to idealism, one that goes beyond a

"realistic" acceptance of a world awash in social inequity, environmental devastation and the threat of nuclear war.[1]

I therefore hesitate to describe my attitude as realistic. And yet, isn't there something unrealistic about striving for something that is, well, impossible?

The human species has been around for roughly 250,000 years, during which time nothing even approaching global solidarity has been achieved. Maybe circumstances have changed, however, with the existential threats of current and looming worldwide catastrophes, each of which necessitates a unified species-wide response. Imagine, however, a global convention of dinosaurs, responding to that onrushing Chicxulub impactor 66 million years ago by demanding a Cretaceous–Tertiary politics and praxis of the impossible. It would have been impossible indeed. My point is that the fact that something is necessary does not mean that it is not still really and realistically impossible.

My doubts regarding global solidarity are due, in part, to the fact that solidarity has been notably absent, even with polities much smaller than the planet Earth. Countries, provinces, cities, local districts, and sometimes even neighborhoods have consistently avoided being internally consistent, and not merely because of cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic heterogeneity. Notwithstanding our penchant for tribal identification, people can be stubbornly insistent on having it their own way, even when "it" might well be not only counter-productive but potentially lethal.

Readers may well consider my attitude unacceptably pessimistic compared to Richard Falk's optimistic manifesto. So let me be clear: Those among us inspired to work toward the impossible are to be applauded and encouraged. But at the same time, those among us who are pessimistic need not, and indeed, should not give up as a result. Thus, for any readers who —like myself—seriously doubt that human solidarity will ever globalize, but who—like myself —also believe that it would be immensely desirable, I would like to offer an existentialist approach, converging with that of Albert Camus. In his brief essay "The Myth of Sisyphus," Camus argued that Sisyphus is an "absurd hero" because he persists in his task despite fully

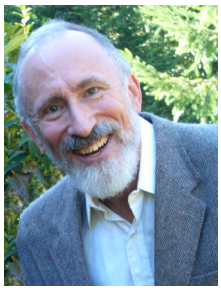
knowing that it is doomed to failure, that his rock will always roll back downhill, just as each of us will ultimately die. Moreover, in this view, Sisyphus is happy.

Similarly, Camus concludes his novel *The Plague* with the ruminations of another hero, Dr. Rieux, who knows that any celebration following the apparent end of the eponymous plague is necessarily premature, because one plague or another will always reappear. Rieux nonetheless resolves "to state quite simply what we learn in time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men [and, of course, women] than to despise." Moreover, as the existentialists have emphasized, it is precisely through struggle—without any necessarily realistic expectation of success—that we achieve the best in our humanity. One need not necessarily believe in achieving the impossible in order to struggle toward it, and doing so—regardless of one's belief—is assuredly something to admire.

Endnotes

1. For a discussion of these dangers, with special reference to the problems posed by nuclear deterrence, see David P. Barash, *Threats: Intimidation and its Discontents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

About the Author



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Toward an Optimism of the Intellect

Upendra Baxi

I applaud Richard Falk's cogent plea for waging generational battles against "the foreclosure of imagination" and his continued insistence on a moral epistemology to achieve "responsible anthropocentrism." I also endorse the rejection of the slogan that "politics" is the "art of possible." It has been the common experience that the quest for the "impossible" animates the tasks of justice. Falk reminds us that the itinerary of the "citizen pilgrim" is both a sacred peregrinology and secular (ad)venture: it installs the figures of the unthinkable as the very core of chasing the predictions of the past and footprints for the future.

Falk invokes three central components for new imagination of the future of the planet now engulfed by escalating anthropological harm. First, St. Francis suggests an "emancipatory path": "Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible." Second, the notion of a "citizen pilgrim" who thinks the unthinkable is a figure of thought by which alone just sustainabilites are sustained. Third, what is required is critical solidarity, not the oppressive imperial solidarities of the state, class (whether old or new), patriarchy, racism, and capital.

Falk seems to me to pose a much-needed question of Anthropocene "we-ness" that helps achieve a socially responsible/response-able planetary loyalty, one in which we are capable of responding to the world around us and the challenges and opportunities that arise. Falk describes it as the "uniqueness of the Anthropocene…to restrict the possible to unsustainable and dysfunctional structures and modes of behavior, while bringing to a head the question of finding more viable ways of organizing life on the planet and living together in a manner that protects future generations." This "we-ness" comes only through critical engagement with

the survival of the planet and all life forms in this seventh decade of the ongoing Sixth Mass Extinction.

Trading in corporate and political evil defines the business as usual paradigm that menaces, to take a most recent example, the Third World's requests to the World Trade Organization to lighten the load of an industrial patent regime and foster a just world order of vaccine distribution amidst the sinister middle phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anthropocene problems such as extreme weather changes, floods, storms, tsunamis, massive deforestation, aggravated sanitation and potable water supply, and draught and desertification are already upon us. We stand warned of the alarming rate of deforestation and biodiversity loss. And even more dire evils will engulf us all towards the middle decades of this century—whether the problems of oceans warming; arctic glaciers melting; sea levels rising; or disappearing states and territories, causing internal displacement or necessitous mass migration across national frontiers. No matter how often climate change denialism persists, or how many theologies of a "Good Anthropocene" are propounded, the impending anthropogenic harm remains far more catastrophic, cruel, and pervasive than COVID-19.

Evolution of response-able Anthropocene "we-ness" involves several steps, big and small. First, the awareness that all forms of life stand imperiled by continuing anthropogenic harm must lead to acceptance that humans are as much a part of "nature" and must therefore begin to transcend all speciesism or anthropomorphism in approaches to Anthropocene justice.

Second, we must learn at least to respect all "companion species" (as Donna Haraway calls them) by pluralizing "several subjects of extinction'' and by revisiting "the doctrines of species encoded in the images of 'biodiversity,' 'humanity,' 'unloved' subjects, and 'absent or non-relational subjects.'"[1]

Third, the violence of "many ingrained hierarchies" and the "embedded exclusions and inequalities in the dominant discourses" ought urgently to yield to "plural ethico-political responses" to "several subjects of extinction."[2]

Finally, the threats (of globalization and neoliberalism) to erase pluralism must be met with Jean-Luc Nancy's fertile notion that obligations of global justice are not new but are embedded in the enterprise of living together. The task for each one of us is the creation of a new world "immediately, without delay," to "reopen each possible struggle for a world" against "global injustice." But this "struggle" must be sustained "precisely in the name of the fact that this world is *coming out of nothing, that there is nothing before it and that it is without models, without principle and without given end, and that is precisely what forms the justice and the meaning of the world*."[3]

The human rights struggle for the creation of a new world lies not in giving old meanings to a new reality; rather, the task is to fully grasp a new dialectic for the future of human rights. The obligation of justice is to de-create the existing world and simultaneously to create alternate worlds as being infinite. The ethical idea of human rights is now to be envisioned as a never-ending struggle for emancipation as justice. This new planetary solidarity is one of "being-in-the-common"—world-creating, in a heroic sense.

Finally, a jurisprudence of extinction (involving both de-creation as well as re-creation) signifies a reversal of Gramscian dictum: "I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will."[4] No such optimism of will can now deliver us out of the combined effects of anthropogenic harm. How then may performances of optimism of intellect detract us from re-writing the past and produce new practices of counterfactual near-future history?

Endnotes

1. Donna Haraway writes, "The origin of rights is in committed relationship, not in separate and pre-existing category identities. . . The question turns out not to be, 'What are animal rights, as if they existed preformed to be uncovered but, 'How may a human enter into a rights relationship with an animal?'" in *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003). On pluralizing subjects of extinction, see Audra Mitchell, "Beyond Biodiversity and Species: Problematizing Extinction," *Theory, Culture, & Society* 33, no. 6 (2016): 24. See also, Claire Colebrook, *Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction*, vol. I (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2014).

2. Mitchell, "Beyond Biodiversity and Species," 23, 24.

3. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Creation of the World, or, Globalization*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 22. See, for an elaborate reflection, B. C. Hutchens, *Jean-Luc Nancy and the Future of Philosophy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 142-154.

4. Upendra Baxi, "Reversing Gramsci: Notes on Optimism of the intellect and Pessimism of the Will?," LASSNET, Valedictory Address, December 10-12, 2016.

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Capitalist Constraints on the Possible

Akeel Bilgrami

Richard Falk's essay global solidarity explores the scope for a genuinely transformative politics for our time. He asks us to refuse the cramping of possibilities for politics that "realist" outlooks would impose on our imagination.

There seem to me to be *at least* two familiar forms of "realist" dismissal of a politics that seeks fundamental change.

One takes the form of saying, "Don't construct ideal political theories, seek out the amelioration that is immediately feasible in the present circumstances." The other dismisses many radical proposals as a nostalgic hankering for the social and economic life and conditions of a bygone era. Consider the sneering dismissal of indigenous outlooks on climate issues that take all the tinkering solutions to these issues that are in the air—from geoengineering to cap-and-trade—as manifestly insufficient, and would instead have us return to a conception of "nature" that refuses to equate it with "natural resources."

Let me say something brief about the second and leave the first for another occasion.

It is hard not to feel that charges of nostalgia are most often to be found on the pens and lips of complacent people. Such people need to be reminded that the most effectively creative early efforts during the Renaissance were constantly being dismissed by medieval scholastics as a nostalgia for a bygone classical age.

The fact is that the complacence from which this qualm about nostalgia is expressed is actually often *not innocent*. What people choose to be complacent about and what they therefore choose to be dismissive about is rather selective, and the selectivity is driven by ideological considerations. Charges of nostalgia are a cousin of a phenomenon that we might call the "It's

too late…" phenomenon. If something is too late to reverse, it is nostalgic to wish to reverse it. "It's too late to return to 1967 borders in Israel; there have been far too many settlements over the last decades…." is just one example. But notice that no one ever said during the decades-long Cold War, "It's too late, the Soviet Union is here to stay and in a large part of the world, private capital is simply a thing of the past. It would be nostalgic to aspire to return to it there." Instead, they put unrelenting pressure (even the pressure of untold violence in Southeast Asia and Latin America) on any socialist experiment, decade after decade until virtually every such experiment fell apart. Thus, qualms about nostalgia are made not only from a point of view of complacence, but a complacence driven by ideological points of view, with deliberate selectivity.

But such motives apart, how shall we assess the charge of nostalgia when it is directed against, for instance, the view that we should refuse to treat "nature" as synonymous with "natural resources"? As any person who is not devoid of common sense knows, questions about climate change and our attitudes towards nature are not sequestered questions of ecology. They are shot through with the most fundamental questions about political economy; and, in particular, such a refusal to treat "nature" with impunity as "natural resources" requires one to transcend the fundamental economic tendencies of capitalism as we have known them. But, on the other hand, as Frederic Jameson points out, "we can more easily imagine the end of the world than we can imagine the end of capitalism."

How shall we diagnose this chronic failure of imagination in our time?

It would seem that its real source lies in the fact that all past efforts to put social democratic constraints on capital are basically unstable. (This is so even in Scandinavian countries, though, being in a peripheral belt of capitalism, they are a little less vulnerable to being constantly undermined by the tendencies of capital.) In the roughly four decades since the remantling of the Bretton Woods institutions, this instability of social democracy has been largely due to the runaway mobility of financialized capital under the new turn that globalization took just then. This is particularly a problem for governments of countries of the South, who are perpetually in fear of capital flight.

Now, most governments which do attempt such challenges to capital do so under the pressure of popular movements. Thus, for instance, Lula came to power in Brazil on the surge of a very impressive popular movement. But neither he nor his successor could achieve very much by way of serious social democratic policy because of anxieties about capital flight. And, in this context, the global solidarity of which Falk speaks will have to mean that were governments to effectively pursue social democratic policies, there would have to be popular movements waiting to occur at each place to which capital flies. And that indeed does look like a very unrealistic scenario. Hardt and Negri had some idea of a deterritorialized perpetual globalized movement by what they labelled a "multitude"—but nobody has shown that idea to be anything but a theorist's fantasy. Even just within the Eurozone, Podemos did not show solidarity with Syrizia during the worse period of the latter's confrontation with the banking and corporate elites in Brussels and Frankfurt.

There is, it would seem, much more scope for success of movements against the tendencies of capital within nations of the South. Just a few years ago in India, there was an impressive solidarity shown between urban working people and the peasantry despite distinct and conflicting interests—since peasants want higher prices for the grains they produce, but that hurts the worker in the city who purchases food. Even so, the workers in Mumbai supported the peasant agitation. That is just the kind of solidarity that is so hard to even imagine at a global level. What sort of similar solidarity could possibly be envisaged between peasants in India and whoever consumes the exported basmati in metropoles abroad?

The solidarity between urban laborer and peasant in India is explained by the fact that low procurement prices for food grains creates destitution among the peasantry and forces their migration to the cities, which then, in turn, creates hardship among laborers in the city due to what Marx called the "reserve army" effect of that migration. So, it is not just in the interests of the peasantry to demand higher prices, but the laborer in the city to support this. But now can you imagine anything like this solidarity emerging in the present frameworks of political and economic culture between white workers in the cities in the United States bordering Mexico and the potentially displaced migrant from Mexico to these cities?

We are then stuck with a dilemma. Solidarities are far more feasible between working people within the borders of nations than among working people across nations, but if they are successful in bringing to power governments with social democratic resolve within their nation, that resolve is mostly unimplementable because of the quite legitimate anxieties regarding capital flight.

Have I, in making these latter observations, succumbed to just the sort of "realism" that Richard Falk is urging us to get past? To think so would be to treat Jameson's pronouncement as a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. But, on the other hand, there is no uniform answer to the question of what sorts of solidarities can and should be pursued in the current global economy. I believe the perspective of countries of the South may yield a quite different set of goals, requiring the mobilization of quite different solidarities than those of countries of the North. This is inevitable since unequal and exploitative relations continue to exist in the relations between the countries of the North and South, even after colonization.

I don't have the space here to set up the analytical apparatus to elaborate how Falk's aspiration to transcend the realist's constant deflation of radical goals might be pursued despite such difficulties and constraints. However, the first and obvious step would be for movements in countries of the South to pressure *their own* governments to refuse the demands on them to pursue neoliberal policies that prohibit fiscal deficits or the increasing of taxes on wealth and corporate profit, and to impose capital controls against the outflow of finance capital. This will no doubt decrease future financial inflows, and they will have to address the problem of trade deficits that follow upon that outcome. The larger Southern economies with a wider range of resources will be able to do this by the latitude that is offered by the possibilities of diversified economies, something unavailable for the smaller economies. So, there will have to be South-South trade relations of support (a specific case of the solidarities that Falk is seeking, quite unlike the sort of elite-driven alliances exemplified by BRICS). None of this will be easy. But all fundamental transformations face the prospect of difficult periods of transition. Falk himself is admirably without illusions about this even as he urges courage and resolve—that is to say, a clear-eyed courage and resolve.

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A Vision from the Future

Guy Dauncey

My name is Maia, and I am 96 years old. I was born in 2025, at the beginning of the Great Transition. I live with my family in an ecovillage outside the small town of Siquerres, in Limón Province, central Costa Rica. Last month, when a dramatic downpour washed away a nearby village, killing fifty-three people, we received offers of help from all over the world. The kindness that flooded in will help us overcome. Global solidarity is real.

I am a biologist, so I understand the self-organizational drive towards increased capacity and unity that underlies our evolutionary story. I was an active participant in the Great Debate that preceded the Great Transition, when the entropists struggled to defend their dying paradigm against the surge of the syntropists. We were proposing a new paradigm based on the primacy of consciousness and the pervasive role of self-organization in the journey from atom to molecule, from single-celled to multi-celled organisms, from warring nations to a unified world, sharing kindness as we evolve into a higher mode of cooperative functionality. The entropists responded that the primacy of consciousness was spiritual nonsense and that nothing could resist the implacable law of entropy, which would eventually cause the entire Universe to suffer a sad, cold, lonely death. They never said so as such, but you could feel their pessimistic thoughts: why work to unify the world, when there was no escape from Bolzmann's ruthless equations?

I have also been a politician, representing Limón Province as a deputy in the Legislative Assembly, so I saw firsthand the battle between those who were committed to a better future for all, and those whose primary commitment was to their plantations, their families, or their plutocratic tax-breaks. I saw how threatened they felt when we proposed converting every Costa Rican farm to regenerative organic farming, and when we sought for Costa Rica to play a

leadership role in the establishment of the United Nations People's Assembly. They were wedded to the hierarchical politics of domination, which had shaped civilizations for ten thousand years, and we never disguised our wish to overthrow that entire system, and to build instead a new ecological civilization based on the politics of cooperation and the economics of kindness.

Could such a transformation have happened without the traumatic 2020s, when the devastating impacts of the climate emergency were such that none could deny them, when children wept at the loss of nature, when demonstrations demanding solutions to the affordable housing crisis closed down city-centres, when anger at the wealth of the billionaires found expression in the torching of their mansions and mega-yachts? Probably not. The desire for comfort and ease runs deep in our human nature. It takes shocks such as these to wake most people out of their solipsistic reveries and lazy consumer indulgences.

My mother was a deputy in the Costa Rica Legislative Assembly before me, and my father was a human rights lawyer, so I grew up accustomed to dinner table conversations about the crisis. I chose to become a biologist out of a desire to avoid these very conflicts, believing that I could bury myself in my study of spider monkeys. When the proposal to form the United Nations People's Assembly took shape, however, and my mother was elected as one of Central America's six delegates, one of a thousand people chosen to represent all the world's people, my pride in her achievement brought me back to the political arena.

When I ran to be a Deputy, I was engaged in political discussions throughout the Spanish-speaking world, and it soon became clear that there were two big obstacles to the success of the new Assembly. The first, no surprise, was the capitalist and corporate elites, who used their billions to try to convince ordinary people that the Assembly was a socialist takeover that would seize control of their lives and create a scary super-elite of global bureaucrats. It had worked with the old Brexit debate in Britain, generating hatred of the European Union, and they hoped it would work again.

The second obstacle was the belief that the People's Assembly was a populistic cover for continued domination by the forces of global capital, and that it would do nothing to address

people's core needs. These included affordable housing, an escape from poverty and debt, an end to the outrageous global inequality, and rapid solutions to the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Some had been taken in by the plutocrats' propaganda, but others shared the same concerns that we had in our family.

The breakthrough that made the critical difference was the formation of the Earth and People's Party, uniting delegates from all over the world behind a globally progressive platform. Closing down the tax havens, prosecuting crimes of ecocide, banning nuclear weapons, forgiving sovereign debts in the global South, banning investments in fossil fuels and deforestation, turning all the world's offshore waters into a global marine reserve, imposing a global wealth tax, transforming global trade by imposing tariffs on nations that did not abide by human rights, social, and environmental treaties—sitting at the table next to my mother as she worked with her colleagues to develop their platform, that was an incredible high, almost as good as the day when the coalition led by the Earth and People's Party won a governing majority in the new Assembly.

So, global solidarity? Yes, it is a very real thing. And yes, we did achieve the impossible. We still cheer for Costa Rica when we take on mighty Brazil in the Copa America, but that is the joy of life, that we can indulge in partisan loyalties while knowing that we share in this larger family, this place in my heart, this hope of my great grandchildren: this one united Earth.

About the Author

Guy Dauncey is an author and ecofuturist working on a positive vision of a sustainable future, and to translate that vision into action. He is the founder of the British Columbia Sustainable Energy Association, and the author or co-author of ten books, including *The Climate Challenge: 101 Solutions to Global Warming* and *Journey to the Future: A Better World Is Possible*. He is an Honorary Member of the Planning Institute of British Columbia, a Fellow of the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland, and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

An "Us" without a "Them"

Michael Karlberg

Richard Falk's essay brings into focus the preeminent challenge of the age: the ability to imagine global human solidarity and translate this into a new social reality.

Skeptics might argue that global human solidarity—if such a thing is possible at all—will remain impossible until a host of social injustices have first been resolved. But the opposite seems more likely. The myriad injustices that currently divide humanity, which prevent us from addressing mounting existential challenges that are global in scope, will only be resolved to the extent that we recognize the underlying oneness that makes our diversity meaningful.

No other framework is capable of motivating people to fully embrace their mutual interdependence as part of one human family—which for some entails adopting an otherwise elusive willingness to sacrifice certain unfettered liberties and inherited privileges for the common good.

To understand why this is the case, consider the relationship between our interests and identities. Western liberalism assumes people who have common self-interests come together to form common identities, which enables them to work together to advance their interests, often at the expense of groups with divergent interests and hence divergent identities. According to this view, our interests shape our perceived identities. But if we interrogate this relationship closely, the reverse can also be true: our identities can shape our perceived interests.

For instance, in her award-winning study *The Heart of Altruism*, political psychologist Kristen Monroe examined twenty-five remarkable cases of altruism, including many individuals and families willing to risk their lives for total strangers. In all cases, she found one common

denominator: altruists perceived their relationship to others not in terms of interest-group ties ties but in terms of ties between themselves and all other human beings. "Altruists," Monroe explains, "have a particular perspective in which all mankind is connected through a common humanity, in which each individual is linked to all others." "Altruists," she concluded, "share a view of the world in which all people are one."[1]

What Monroe is talking about here is a globally inclusive human identity—a sense of oneness, or human solidarity—which influences perceptions of self-interest and self-sacrifice in relation to others. And this relationship between identities and interests is the reason a sense of global solidarity which values diversity is essential if we are to address the many challenges that we now face as a species. As long as we continue to understand the world primarily in terms of "us" and "them"—whatever the categories are—we will be unable to overcome our narrowly perceived self-interests and work together to create a peaceful, just, and sustainable future together.

Skeptics will argue this is impossible because all human identities are (allegedly) formed oppositionally. A global human identity would thus be impossible because there is no "other" against which a globally inclusive identity can set itself. According to this widely held view, there can be no "us" unless there is also a "them." Such an argument, however, is pure supposition. There is no empirical evidence to support it; indeed, it is not an empirically verifiable hypothesis. Moreover, the logic upon which this argument is based is deeply flawed, as Arash Abizadeh so clearly demonstrated in an article titled "Does Collective Identity Presuppose an Other? On the Alleged Incoherence of Global Solidarity."[2]

As Abizadeh explains, the view that human identities must be particularist, exclusive, or oppositional traces back from Rousseau and Hegel to more contemporary thinkers such as Charles Taylor and Chantal Mouffe. This view derives from a theory of individual ego formation in which the individual ego or *self* requires mutual recognition by an external *other* in order to gain a sense of self-differentiation, self-consciousness, and self-worth. Skeptics of an inclusive global identity tacitly assume that this theory, which was developed to explain processes of *individual* identity formation, also applies to processes of *collective* identity formation. However, even if we assume that this theory is valid with respect to the differentiation of individual egos, there is no reason to believe that it explains or delimits all processes of collective identity formation.

As Abizadeh explains, "Individual socialization requires interaction with external others. But socializing an individual to identify with a collective identity could, rather obviously, simply occur through social interaction with individuals who also identify with it." Therefore, even if we agree that there can be no "I" unless there is a "them," it does not necessarily follow that there can be no "us" unless there is a "them." Furthermore, even if we assume that collective identities must in some way derive from *difference*, this still does not exclude the possibility of a global human identity. As Abizadeh explains, collective identity can be "constructed on the basis of difference from hypothetical values and the imagined collective identities centered on them, or on the basis of difference from the values of a past historical identity from which one wishes to mark one's distance… humanity's own past provides a rich and terrifying repository in contrast to which cosmopolitan identity could constitute its 'difference.'"[3]

In short, the argument that all human identities are formed oppositionally and that a global human identity is impossible because there would be no "other" is neither logically defensible nor empirically verifiable. Rather, the argument derives from an inherited discourse on the particularist nature of human identities that was consolidated alongside culturally contingent processes of racial, national, ideological, and religious identity construction and differentiation—which have had disastrous consequences.

Ironically, this inherited discourse now continues to influence thinking even among progressive scholars who seek to challenge many of the injustices that stem from the increasingly dysfunctional antagonistic identity constructs that reflect and support this discourse.

A globally inclusive human identity does not exclude the possibility of other nested identities that derive from the rich diversity that characterizes humanity. We all hold multiple, overlapping, non-exclusive, partial identities based on things like gender, age, family, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, occupation, personal interest, socio-economic status, and so forth. None of these partial identities necessarily preclude a sense of oneness with humanity or a commitment to act as a responsible global citizen.

A global "we" can accommodate multiple secondary distinctions between "us" and "them" when those distinctions are not understood in a hostile or adversarial manner. Moreover, it only takes one individual who identifies in this way, and acts accordingly, to disprove the hypothesis

referred to above that *all* human identities are *necessarily* exclusive or oppositional. Surely, we can all recognize the existence of individuals who invalidate this hypothesis. Some of us might even be familiar with entire communities that subordinate their communal identity to a wider solidarity with all of humanity.

Endnotes

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Beyond Anthropocentric Solidarity

Alexander Lautensach

To accomplish a Great Transition of any kind would require an unprecedented measure of solidarity among countries, regions, cultures, communities, and individuals. The question to what extent such solidarity could be considered possible is therefore of existential importance. Richard Falk offered an insightful exploration of what forms and extents of solidarity might be possible, feasible, desirable, and—most importantly—necessary. He formulates the goal as developing a binding and overriding ethos of "responsible anthropocentrism" that does not eliminate cultural differences but that complements them "with a sense of commonality while sustaining their separate and distinctive identities."

This post has two main objectives: to complement Richard Falk's outline with some additional considerations on feasibility and to address the question to what extent an anthropocentric ethic can adequately support a Great Transition in principle.

The question of feasibility focuses on necessary contextual conditions and on humanity's intrinsic capabilities. Regarding the former, historical precedents highlight the powerful influence of a shared challenge or adversary. Short of an approaching sizable asteroid, a pandemic serves well—or so one might have thought. Falk, like others, pointed out the overwhelming failure of humanity to effectively cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating woefully low dispositions towards solidarity.[1] Perhaps a more devastating pandemic would have elicited more solidarity in terms of responsiveness, containment, administrative commitment, and civil discipline. At any rate, a Great Transition necessitates that we abandon the coveted ideal of the pre-crisis "normal," that we deliberately turn away from counterproductive practices and strive in solidarity for radically new ways of living in the spirit

of Deep Adaptation.[2] A challenge capable of enforcing that degree of solidarity would need to be much more severe and obvious than COVID ever was.

At the center of the quest for a Transition lies necessarily the reduction of our collective impact on the Earth, currently exceeding sustainable levels by about seventy percent.[3] For a global population of near eight billion, that would entail significant reductions in most people's standards of life, even if we succeeded in mitigating economic inequality.[4] A reduction in our global population seems even less considerable. Without such reductions, however, no sustainable future is possible, because the manifestations of our ecological overshoot (climate change, other effects of pollution, resource scarcity, biodiversity loss, ecological deterioration, etc.) would remain unaddressed.

To what extent could global solidarity possibly empower humanity to accomplish such radical changes? Could any extent of cultural learning, sociopolitical empowerment, or humanistic empathy get us even close? Falk's ethos of "responsible anthropocentrism," or any form of "patriotism for humanity," may help in the case of a pandemic, but its exclusive focus on Homo sapiens precludes any substantial progress on the wider predicaments arising from our unsustainable impact on the Earth.

Anthropocentrism in its various forms creates perceptual and moral barriers that prevent people from reflecting about human reproduction and consumption in terms that are non-selfish.[5] Indeed, the self-proclaimed anthropocentric ideal of human flourishing can never be reached without a genuine concern for the flourishing of other life forms for their own sake. No species can exist, let alone flourish, independently from other species. But because our understanding of our dependencies remains forever incomplete, imparting only instrumental worth on non-human life forms neither guarantees our sustainable environmental security, nor relieves our loneliness as "the only species that truly matters." This is how Lewis Perelman came to assert that "ecology has taken two of the most fundamental premises of Western culture—the individual right of property and the political right of sovereignty—and blasted them at the root. In fact, ecology pulled the foundation out from under the whole elaborate superstructure of the Western notion of 'human rights.'"[6]

Moreover, the anthropocentric goal of human flourishing itself remains ill-defined, as neither total utility nor average utility satisfies all the anthropocentrists' preferences. As prospects for the Great Transition are concerned, a purely anthropocentric ethos can never quite deliver as much as it promises, even in the eyes of the anthropocentrist.

Anthropocentrism also fails to provide any effective coping mechanism with respect to the Anthropocene predicament. Whether anthropocentrists try ever more desperately to ensure the continued survival of elites under the global crisis, or whether they try to mitigate the crisis through egalitarian policies, will not make much difference in the end. The outcome of the former will be a world dominated by warfare and famine ("Breakdown"), while the latter leads to a global police state ("Fortress World"). Both would be overpopulated.

Only an ethic that prioritizes the timely stabilization of ecological support structures and their protection from excessive human demands can help us avoid those outcomes. Its policies would be primarily precautionary and radically ecocentric.[7] It transforms Falk's suggested ethos into one of "responsible ecocentrism", or a patriotism not for humanity but for Gaia. It extends moral standing to all life forms and to the ecosystems they call home, in a spirit of kinship and shared worth. It would end our gross abuse of non-human nature, carried out under various pretenses of resourcism or mere entertainment. It replaces scientifically untenable and morally bankrupt schemes of so-called "sustainable development" with goals that emphasize humanity managing itself out of solidarity with the Earth.

In the long term, and considering our chronic ignorance of ecological interdependencies, only a naturally evolved biosphere, not free from anthropogenic influences but with humans as an integral and self-managed component, will have the stability and resilience that satisfies the characteristics of a Great Transition. Global solidarity within humanity will not be enough; global solidarity with all life and with the biosphere as a whole will be the condition for our successful transition. Such a profound ethical course change represents a huge undertaking that depends on an unprecedented amount of cultural learning. It encompasses all levels of social organization and calls on the participation of all educators, caregivers, decision-makers, and their supporters in an act of solidarity that surpasses all precedents.[8] Ultimately, the most important question focuses on extending the circle of solidarity not just around the globe but beyond our species.

Endnotes

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7. Ted Mosquin and Stan Rowe, "A Manifesto for Earth," *Biodiversity* 5, no. 1 (2004): 3-9, www.ecospherics.net/pages/EarthManifesto.pdf.

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Locating Power in the Neoliberal Age

Radmila Nakarada

Richard Falk's question obviously a synthesis of questions, including whether redistributive policies that have given rise to almost obscene economic inequalities can be corrected, whether the erosion of the welfare state can be curtailed, whether participative democracy can be reinvented, and whether the common good can replace the overarching principle of greed and egotism and inspire a tangible species identity. The answer could be a simple yes, that globalizing solidarity is possible if the dominating neoliberal paradigm is suspended or transcended—i.e., if a far-reaching paradigm shift takes place as in the seventies, when the Keynesian economic model was replaced by a Hayekian one. Bearing in mind the turmoil, crises, risks, and victimizations the neoliberal project has produced, one would think that a change toward a kinder and fairer world, tailored "for the Many and not a Few" (to quote Jeremy Corbyn), is not an unrealistic hope.

However, in assessing the realism of this hope, one has to face the fact that the global neoliberal order has demonstrated its capacity not only to survive the consequences of the economic crises, extreme social inequalities, and growing number of excluded and superfluous it produces, but also to protect and extend the privileges of the tiny but extraordinarily powerful minority, with little effective opposition. Neoliberal capitalism expands, incorporates, and creates new non-transparent locations of power and decision-making, but also victims with distorted perceptions of self-interest and limited or no capacity for collective action.[1] Together with technological advances that, among else, "humanize the machines" and are moving towards giving them independent decision-making capacities, the neoliberal order is creating a new Reality. This new Reality encompasses the still present murmurs of the colonial past and the nascent digital future, with but a very hoarse voice of the Left.

Nevertheless, there is an expectation that somehow the accumulation of the grievances and existential threats will produce a spontaneous rehabilitation of the ethos of solidarity—solidarity as a civic relation, political right, and praxis. But what if the class war has already been won by the 1%, and their victory together with technological advances has radically tamed the capacity of resistance? What if the distance between the privileged minority and the rest is so wide that little space exists for negotiations and social compromise? What if this distance between the unjust distribution of life goods and the walls of power protects the privileged from the ills and threats of the really existing order? Moreover, to what extent do the illogical reactions of the victimized citizens, forced to battle for their own interests in a situation where the protection of state is severely curtailed or nonexistent, lacking the experience of community, solidarity, and the common good, participate in creating an extended entropy?

I am posing these questions in order to point out that there is a need to address the challenge concerning the defeated, excluded, and victimized citizens and their distorted choice of options. Consider the recent failed attempt by workers in Bessemer, Alabama, to create a union in an Amazon distribution center. In spite of the inhumane conditions of work (where, among else, monitoring of time and work is done by algorithms), only 738 out of 5,805 of workers voted for the union. Some of them voted no due to the pressure and threats of the managements; younger workers did either because they do not understand unions, never had anything to do with them, or perceive them as thieves who want to take part of their hard-earned income; and others who did have some union experience did out of disillusionment that nothing positive came out of it.[2] If we link this one illustration with the fact that in the US only 6.3% of those employed in the private sector are members of unions, we can discern how the experience of collective action, protection, and solidarity are structurally invisible.

Another perplexing finding comes from a recent German survey done by researchers from the University of Kostanz and Berlin.[3] The results show that amidst a growing income and wealth gap, a "perception fallacy" is present. For instance, the poorest 10% see themselves as belonging to the "middle class." As a result, the researchers argue, the debates on inequality tend to remain an abstract issue for the average voters, who seem to have a hidden "conservative instinct" when these questions are discussed. Finally, the antagonistic relations of

workers in the rich countries to the non-European and non-American refugees and migrants in the last decade shows once again, the illusion that victims of the same global system have the capacity to mutually recognize each other's predicament and demonstrate Kantian hospitality, an instinct of solidarity. Instead, a new wave of building walls ensued, legitimized by their fear and existential anxiety.[4]

This to my mind means that critical social science itself has to undergo a re-examination of its quest, and develop diagnostic capacities and insights that address the structurally determined illogical responses of the losers, the humiliated, and the excluded. Theory must find a way to articulate the complex predicament and reach the incapacitated citizens that have accepted being reduced to "coping, hoping, doping, and shopping."[5] Revealing the new locations of power, the real (non-transparent) adversaries, as well as exploring their vulnerabilities and discovering possible new spaces and forms of resistance and solidarity, is a task yet to be addressed. The question "Can solidarity be globalized?" is thus simultaneously a question of to what extent have we deciphered the world in which we live, where we can locate the hidden energies of resistance and collective action, and whether the clear articulation of new theoretical insights, beyond ethical and political appeals, can become a "material force," a transformative contribution to the emergence of movements devoted to the recreation of spaces of collective action and solidarity.

Endnotes

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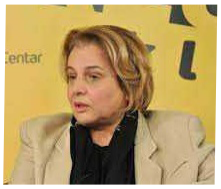
About the Author



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Nested Global Cooperation

Michael Narberhaus

If we want to learn better ways to reach the level of planetary cooperation that we urgently need, we might want to learn the mechanisms of how cultural evolution has brought us to where we are now.

The anthropologists Peter Richerson and Rob Boyd (among others) have argued that cultural and genetic evolution are intertwined; they coevolve. Genes influence culture, and culture influences genes. Such gene-culture coevolution has facilitated the transition from small-group collaborative settings to the conditions that enabled cooperation across large groups.[1]

Social technologies work best when they tap into our genetically evolved psychological predispositions. For example, social norms emerged from our ability to learn from each other and are a crucial part of cooperation in any small group or large society. Because they harness aspects of our genetically evolved psychology, social norms are very powerful.

In his book *Ultrasociety: How 10,000 Years of War Have Made Humans the Greatest Cooperators on Earth*, Peter Turchin describes how the human species developed its amazing capacity to cooperate in competition with other groups. We developed a variety of mental mechanisms that make us adept at promoting our group's interests, often in peaceful competition with other groups. But we sometimes turn against people who are not part of our group, and we sometimes do so violently.

Evolutionary anthropologist Joseph Henrich shows the crucial role religions played in promoting pro-social behavior across large anonymous societies. The more punishing and the more knowing the "big gods" are, the less people cheat in favor of themselves over distant co-religionists. The introduction of an afterlife, especially the possibility of going to hell, made cooperation especially successful as Henrich found out. The "selfish wish" to avoid divine

punishment makes religious people especially cooperative.[2]

Across Western societies, religions are in sharp decline and are therefore losing their role in binding people together. There is also no other planetary species (as far as we know) with whom which competition would force us to cooperate as a planetary society.

The only possible pathway therefore seems to be to develop conscious intentionality (or conscious evolution) to design the system of global cooperation.

The art of creating a stable system will involve integrating the tribal impulses of the human psyche and channeling them towards something productive that contributes to collective well-being.

The recent waves of nationalism we have been seeing across Western societies and beyond is a rebellion partly against the economic effects of globalization, but it is at least as much a rebellion against the effects of the dominant liberal (and globalist) cultural paradigm that is perceived by many people as a threat to their collective identity and culture.

Progressives too often put the idea of global identity and global solidarity in opposition to national identity. This will always create opposition and resistance from large parts of our societies who share a deeper sense and attachment to their community and nation. I was therefore happy to read this in Falk's essay: "An ethos of human solidarity would not eliminate differences but would complement them with a sense of commonality while sustaining their separate and distinctive identities."

Nicholas Christakis, the director of Yale University's Human Nature Lab, argues that "[o]ur evolutionary past compels us universally to make a basic obligatory sort of society." In other words, "…societies have some shapes they cannot assume and some constraints that they must abide by….Humans can deviate from the blueprint—but only up to a point. When they deviate too much […] society collapses."[3] The blueprint determines, for example, that if a society is successful, it will have accommodated humans' preference for one's own group.

To many, our naturally evolved ingroup bias is just negative per se. I do believe, however, that it is not so simple. For instance, Emile Durkheim, the founder of modern sociology, already

To many, our naturally evolved ingroup bias is just negative per se. I do believe, however, that it is not so simple. For instance, Emile Durkheim, the founder of modern sociology, already showed "that people who are more tightly bound by ties of family, religion, and local community have lower rates of suicide. But when people escape from the constraints of community, they live in a world of 'anomie' or normlessness, and their rate of suicide goes up."[4]

According to evolutionary biologist David Sloan Wilson, human civilization works best with a nested structure: "Life consists of units within units. In the biological world, we have genes, individuals, groups, species and ecosystems—all nested within the biosphere. In the human world, we have genes, individuals, families, villages and cities, provinces and nations—all nested within the global village." Within such a nested system, we have to grapple with the inevitable conflicts that arise between lower and higher units: "What's good for me can be bad for my family. What's good for my family can be bad for my village, and so on, all the way up to what's good for my nation can be bad for the global village."[5]

We have to promote the idea of the nested structure if we want to solve the game theoretical global coordination problems we have as a human species. This would be first step towards a more constructive and less polarized discussion about human organization on earth.

Endnotes

1. Pete Richerson and Rob Boyd, *Not by Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

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4. Jonathan Haidt, "The Ethic of Globalism, Nationalism, and Patriotism," *Minding Nature* 9, vol. 3 (2016), 18–24, https://www.humansandnature.org/the-ethics-of-globalism-nationalism-and-patriotism.

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About the Author

Michael Narberhaus is co-founder of the Smart CSOs Lab and the founder of the Protopia Lab, a think tank and social innovation lab for open dialogue, learning, and innovation on how to redevelop trust within our polarized societies. Previously, he worked for WWF-UK to engage policymakers, business, and civil society in more systemic approaches to transform consumption and production systems towards respecting environmental limits and well-being for current and future generations.

The Long View

Heikki Patomäki

A proper world civilization thinks at least two hundred years ahead. This is the temporal horizon in which we should be seeing the transition from the world of geopolitical states and capitalist world economy to planetary forms of organization based on global solidarity. It is not only that ethical and political learning takes time but also that the process may involve dramatic crises and tragic catastrophes. Moreover, world-historical developments are not linear. Not all tendencies point to the same direction, developments can be contradictory, and world-historical nodal points include saddle points inducing periods of stasis and regression. From this perspective, I find Richard Falk's last question the most salient: "Do we have the time?"

In the early twenty-first century, we are facing anthropogenic risks such as nuclear weapons, climate change, and pandemics. We are all part of the same industrial civilization and interconnected through its mechanisms and processes. All this would seem to require a planetary perspective, encouraging and facilitating the adoption of a moral viewpoint, which is based on the ability to see one's self, understandings, and surroundings in a wider context and also from others' viewpoints.

The problem is that our world consists of organized social systems. Organizations are complex responsive processes of relating. Modern sovereign nation-states are organizations, but so, for instance, are their ministries. Other relevant organizations include international organizations such as the OECD, multinational corporations and banks, associations of radical Islam, and the Brazilian movement of landless workers, as well as attempts to build a global populist or alt-right movement. Organizations—as complex responsive processes—are not only responding but also learning. Learning processes may also lead them to revise their identity, goals, and

strategies. Not all learning is progressive; learning can also be regressive, even pathological.

Modern humans are positioned in multiple organized social systems simultaneously, and these positionings condition and shape their habitus and responses to various global processes and risks. Because of the way the world is currently organized, there are structurally induced illusions about how the world works, and these play a key role in economic and political processes. These illusions, as sub-varieties of ideological thinking, include illusions as local and particular knowledge, in contrast to understanding the totality of social relations and processes and from seeing things also from the point of view of others. Things may appear to a particular, positioned actor in a way that reflects the essence only from its limited point of view, which may be distorted or one-sided. At worst, the characteristic modes of responsiveness may include narcissism of collective memory, Manichean dualism of good and evil, and fallacy of composition.

Learning can of course occur within existing systems, and new organizations—such as a world party or global greenhouse gas tax organization—can be created. Dramatic crises and tragic catastrophes can trigger or generate progressive learning, but the point is also to avoid crises and especially global catastrophes, to prevent them from happening. An alternative path is to revise the existing and construct new global institutions in order to tackle common problems in an adequate way. The revised and new institutions should be more open to differences and revision than the post-WWII institutions have been. Self-transformative capacity generates dependable expectation of peaceful changes and qualifies the sense of community, fostering malleable, tolerant, and pluralist group-identities (assuming sufficient socio-economic security, absence of unfair privileges, and other contextual factors). What emerges is a dialectic of global institution building and reorganization of social systems and politics. Falk's question remains acutely relevant —"do we have the time?"—but attempts to rush the process may be counterproductive. Since this is a long and complicated process of institutionalization of mutual acceptance, trust, and procedures and practices of peaceful change, and since it is always vulnerable to escalation of conflicts, an unthinking attempt at global transformations may be disastrous.

Finally, we should also try to anticipate the consequences of planetary unification and the emergence of a global political community. A world political community—perhaps a world state

in some sense—is unlikely to emerge, or be sustainable, without a "civilizing" and storytelling process appropriate for the identity of world citizens. A key question is, would this "civilizing" and storytelling process resonate with deep tendencies underlying actual geo-historical events, episodes, and trends? Are there reasons to believe that world history is somehow—inevitably or otherwise—taking humanity in this kind of a cosmopolitan direction, and that attempts to "civilize" humankind further and cultivate planetary stories about the common fate of humanity are thus grounded on deep non-contingent logics or mechanisms? How contested will this process be? World history is an open-ended process, and, indeed, the process of planetary unification will not result in a harmonious end of history, where everything is tranquil and nothing happens.

About the Author

Heikki Patomäki is a social scientist, activist, and Professor of World Politics at the University of Helsinki. He has published widely on such topics as the philosophy and methodology of social sciences, peace and futures studies, and global political economy, justice, and democracy. His books include *Disintegrative Tendencies in Global Political Economy: Exits and Conflicts* and *A Possible World: Democratic Transformation of Global Institutions* (with Teivo Teivainen). Patomäki is a full member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters and Life Member of Clare Hall at the University of Cambridge. He is a longtime activist of the international Attac movement and a member of the Steering Committee of EuroMemo and DiEM25. He holds a PhD from the University of Turku.

Universalism and the Particular

Shahrzad Sabet

In his stimulating opening essay, Richard Falk invites us to imagine the *possibility* of a global human identity. But skeptics will question not just the possibility of a universal identity, but also its *desirability*. This skepticism is commonly rooted in the legitimate concern that universalist aspirations don't properly recognize the role of particular identities and experiences in the constitution of individual and collective life. Indeed, while the tumultuous events of the last eighteen months have vividly amplified the need for a widely shared sense of human solidarity, they have also exposed the deeply fraught relationship between our oneness and our diversity. Here in the United States, we have readily seen, for instance, how universalist appeals can suppress the recognition of marginalized experiences, yielding damaging and distorted notions such as the fiction of color blindness, or the plea that All Lives Matter. The light of universalism, we rightly fear, can blind rather than illuminate.

But the problem is not that our diversity and our oneness are irreconcilably at odds. The problem is that our prevailing notions of universalism obscure the deeper confluence between our commonalities and our differences.

Whether in philosophy or public discourse, the concepts that have come to express our shared humanity are proving inadequate to the challenges we face. That words like "cosmopolitanism" and "universalism" trigger unease and resistance across the political spectrum, and in radically different clusters of contemporary society, is deeply revealing in this respect: how we understand and articulate our oneness as human beings requires urgent reconsideration.

In Western thought and practice, a universalist ethic is widely thought to be at its best when conceived as a commitment to the equal moral worth and dignity of all persons by virtue of their humanity. This is a fundamental basic value indeed. But as it stands, this vital and venerated

In Western thought and practice, a universalist ethic is widely thought to be at its best when conceived as a commitment to the equal moral worth and dignity of all persons by virtue of their humanity. This is a fundamental basic value indeed. But as it stands, this vital and venerated expression of our oneness struggles to give our differences their due. By proclaiming our universal moral equivalence, it yields a recognition of our humanity that is ultimately generic—a commensuration of human beings that can blur the essential contours of our diversity, and obscure the divergent experiences those contours represent.

And yet, despite these limits, a rationally derived commitment to the basic equality of all is widely deemed the version of universalism most hospitable to difference. Its virtue in this respect is thought to lie in its leanness, abstractness, and rationality. By assuming an abstract and relatively slim concept of what we share in common, it avoids the risk of uniformly imposing the cultural or racial bias that a more concrete and full-bodied conception of our shared humanity might carry. By requiring only thin, emotionally sober bonds of connection between human beings, it avoids the volatile passions and thick identities that have made our differences oppressive in the visceral realm of blood and belonging.

Indeed, legitimate fears that universalism will erase rather than empower have pushed our universalist notions in a clear direction—away from the affective texture of identity, solidarity, and belonging, towards thinner and more abstract expressions of our oneness. But this is a mistake: the light of universalism will illuminate the particular only when it is allowed to shine fully in the emotionally rich realms of identity, solidarity, and love.

To appreciate why, think of those you love. You honor and protect the universal aspects and entitlements of their personhood, to be sure. But you are also moved to recognize meaningfully their distinctiveness. You feel compelled to understand the full texture of their experiences, and to give voice to their particular insights and perspectives. You are attentive to the singular burdens they have borne and the distinctive harms they have suffered. Thick, feelingful bonds are necessarily conducive to the appreciation of difference. Rationally derived recognitions of abstract moral equivalence are not. Paradoxically, to properly recognize the diverse realities that constitute the human experience—to protect and promote the vitality of our local and particular affiliations—we must lean more heavily into our oneness, not tiptoe timidly around it.

Far from threatening or erasing the particular, then, a genuine and thickly conceived universal identity is uniquely equipped to recognize, secure, and empower the manifold expressions of human diversity. On this view, the desirability of a globalized solidarity derives directly, if in part, from the desirability of our diversity as human beings.

This observation—and its marked divergence from the basic assumptions of our predominant intellectual frameworks—highlights an added point: realizing a vision of widespread human solidarity (or, indeed, any vision of profound social change) requires, among many other things, a rigorous re-examination of society's conceptual foundations. Given the collective experience of the last eighteen months, and the apparent inadequacy of our universalist notions to address the staggering challenges before us, our prevailing concepts of human oneness are a compelling place to start.

Richard Falk envisions a globally inclusive solidarity that "would not eliminate our differences, but complement them, while sustaining their separate and distinctive identities." My brief comments here suggest that we can credibly stretch our imaginations even further. A universal collective identity would not only accommodate and complement our diverse bounded affiliations—it may well provide uniquely optimal conditions for the meaningful recognition, protection, and vibrancy of human diversity.

Of course, cultivating a globally inclusive identity alongside our bounded ones will not be easy, painless, or uncontroversial—but it's not utopian. As Richard Falk eloquently argues, progress has always rested on "the pursuit of the impossible." A boldly reimagined universalism is the impossibility we must now urgently pursue.

About the Author

Shahrzad Sabet is Co-Director of the Center on Modernity in Transition and a Fellow at New York University's Institute for Public Knowledge. Her research and training span political science, philosophy, economics, and psychology. Her current book project explores how a reimagined cosmopolitanism can resolve the social and philosophical tensions around collective identity. She has held positions at Princeton University, the University of Maryland, and Harvard University, where she received her PhD from the Department of Government.

The Key Is Interrelated Communities

Charlene Spretnak

Richard Falk's engaging essay invites us to identify various "foreclosures of the imagination" that are blocking the emergence of pathways to greater global solidarity in the future. Any realistic thoughts about the future, though, must surely be set within the context of the physical conditions humankind will face in the Era of Disasters, which we have already entered. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been easier for people to imagine a regional or planetary situation where forces of nature take over and humans are not in control. Still, the human tendency to ignore an almost unthinkable threat in the hope that it will go away or strike someone else is a very problematic foreclosure of imagination in our situation. Regardless, in the coming decades, every department and agency in every government in nearly every country is going to be focused on, in addition to its usual duties, the ramifications of frequent, massively destructive catastrophes causing cumulative, often irreparable damage to the economy, social structure, institutions, communities, and mental health.

We survive or die where we live, so a place-based, community focus is ascendant as the planetary crises worsen. Perhaps it is time to dust off the decades-old, but marginalized, "alternative" vision of the global family of humankind as being a nested community of communities of communities. In this model, the United Nations would be restructured, which would be reflected in a redesign of the seating in the General Assembly chamber. Instead of alphabetical seating, there would be major groupings according to the continents; within those groups, countries would be seated together according to regions. When a speaker would address the Assembly from any of the continental or regional groups, the context of what the speaker's country and its neighbors are dealing with in terms of climate or viral disasters, attempted recovery, and waves of climate refugees would be commonly known. That is,

Enlightenment abstractions would have to make room for attention to the physical realities and vulnerabilities of the Earth Community (a term coined by the late cultural historian Thomas Berry to include all species). Continuing as 193 Lone Cowboy states (or Thoroughly Autonomous Individuals, in Enlightenment terms) as the membership of the UN will become self-defeating. Global solidarity needs to be woven with webs of place-based connection, from the planetary level to continents and on down.

Many of the proven benefits of Community Emergency Preparedness might well be relevant as adaptations in this type of interlinked global, continental, national, and regional solidarity. Among these elements are multilayered, thoroughly inclusive networks of communication (including face-to-face message chains, in case electronic systems are down); the creation of local and regional self-reliance via developing food webs; regional power grids; community-based economies ("Buy Local," land-trusts, cooperatives, exporting only surpluses); ecologizing the economy; and a healthcare system that involves the community. In addition to all the international movements and NGOs already in place, additional horizontal communication could be achieved by resuscitating the Sister Cities program (from the peace movement of the early 1980s). Cities have already been linked with two or three cities of similar size around the world, so online communication could now be revved up within every cluster of Sister Cities to share information and ask questions about what's working well regarding climate action, implementing disaster preparedness and recovery, absorbing large numbers of climate refugees, and other pressing matters.

As for "foreclosures of the imagination," Falk mentioned "the Enlightenment paradigm." While there are certainly Enlightenment values worth preserving (and evolving), one of the most problematic aspects of this frame of reference is its adoption from the Scientific Revolution of the mechanistic worldview: the belief that society is essentially atomized, consisting of isolated human organisms that have no inherent interrelatedness with one another and that function internally in biomechanistic ways. This premise has skewed modern science, education, social structures, and personal life in modernity. In the past fifteen years, however, numerous discoveries have revealed that dynamic interrelatedness is central to the ways in which humans are actually structured and actually function. This relational awakening in

physiology constitutes a grand correction to the damaging mechanistic assumptions. The emergence of post-mechanistic, relational thinking is extremely relevant to how we now design community healthcare, education, emergency services, and efforts to strengthen the social fabric of communities at every level. Rather than slogging along into the Era of Disasters with incorrect mechanistic assumptions underlying our policies and practices in modernized cultures worldwide, we can, instead, apply the new relational discoveries. Incorporating them simply makes everything work better. They are so efficacious and cost-effective that many have already been applied in most hospitals in the United States.[1]

A second frame of reference that weighs heavily on us is neoliberalism, which effectively blocks efforts toward greater global solidarity and so much else. After forty years, it is entrenched in power structures worldwide. Because its proponents have repeatedly blown a large hole in the tax revenue stream via large tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, many countries (certainly including the US) now have depleted public coffers just when so much needs to be done. Scores of millions of people born after 1980 in the United States, for instance, think it is normal that corporate taxation now amounts to only 6.6% of the annual federal revenue (in 2019), that corporations and almost the entire business sector largely stopped paying raises to most workers after 1980, and that those in the highest tax brackets pay so little.

How can neoliberalism be deflated without a massive public education effort to explain to the American public how we got into this hole and why we need higher, corrective taxes now—as well as demanding that the corporate sector make restitution for four decades of withheld/stolen raises? The Democrats will not do this because they are complicit, their leadership having embraced Neoliberal Lite after 1992 to the present. I agree with earlier responses that a coalescence of movements and organizations will be necessary to defeat and replace neoliberalism (though such coalitions are very difficult to achieve), but a public education effort explaining the devastation caused by neoliberalism is crucial before, or along with, any demands about changing policy. Absent a grassroots understanding of what has happened, grievances will continue to be manipulated into violent polarization, shattering hopes of solidarity at any level.

Endnotes

1. Charlene Spretnak, *Relational Reality: New Discoveries of Interrelatedness That Are Transforming the Modern World* (Topsham, Maine: Green Horizons Books, 2011).

About the Author

Charlene Spretnak is the author of nine books on cultural history, feminism, Green politics, and religion and spirituality, including *The Resurgence of the Real*. Her recent work explores how discoveries in human biology about dynamic interrelatedness as the key to understanding how the physical world, including humans, is structured and functions. She is a co-founder of the US Green Party movement and also of two branches of the feminist movement: the women's spirituality movement and ecofeminism. She holds an MA in English and American literature from the University of California at Berkeley.

Unity in Shared Vulnerability

Martha Van Der Bly

We can build a new future by looking out over a new horizon lamenting—impatiently—all that still must be done. Or we can acknowledge all that has been achieved that once seemed impossible. For within our necessarily imperfect reality, we can see the building of a dream in progress. If the pandemic has exposed one thing, it is that the social imperative that drives the global society is "the human trait that the capacity and inclination to connect is greater than to disconnect. The desire to cross borders is greater than to build walls, and the desire to explore new lands is greater than to stay at home."[1] Yes, the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of expanding solidarity. Yet in the *longue durée* of expanding solidarities, the step towards global solidarity faces a particular transformation.

Imagining Patriotism for Humanity

These are the times for radical imaginations, and we are challenged to imagine a "patriotism for humanity." I am reminded of an art installation of the Irish artist John Byrne, in which he asks people on O'Connell Bridge in Dublin simply one question: Would you die for Ireland? No context given. "Yes, I would die for me country!", some say. "No, no interest whatsoever!", another one exclaims. "Yes, if the money was right," one guy replies, and one woman with flaming red hair simply sighs, "I am dying for my country, bit by bit. Every day." Ireland is, of course, a country with contested borders. But would you die for Italy? For France? For Italy? For Germany? Would you die for the United States of America? Would you die for our planet? Would you make the ultimate sacrifice for Humanity? The answer might probably not be "yes" or "no" or "depends on the money," but most likely be "why?"

How different would the answers be if Mars attacks! We can immediately imagine humanity

coming together as one. We, Earthlings, will create an Army of Earthlings, defending our beloved blue and green planet. Flags will be designed, blue and green waving from every building of every capital of countries now provinces of Earth-land. We will sing the Earthling Anthems—"The Planet of the Free and Home of the Brave"—and all subversive elements will be called traitors. We will say, "We are one: one earth, one people." The problem is not the possibility of global solidarity, because we know it is slumbering just to be awakened as this imagination demonstrates. Nor is it the need for global solidarity, for every house divided against itself will not stand and will be brought to desolation—as we are seeing around us every day.

The main problem that we are currently facing is the absence of an imminent alien invasion, an external enemy. How can we become "we" when there is no "them"? If we have nothing but ourselves, a kingdom divided? This means that we must imagine new ways, new forms that shape social cohesion.

Shared Global Vulnerability

I argue that the path towards global solidarity is built upon the notion of shared vulnerability. No longer is our strength what defines us as a society, but our weakness. No longer do we seek to triumph over "the other"; we now have to triumph over ourselves: humanity needs to radically change in order to survive.[2] This notion requires new forms of solidarity. Durkheim's "mechanical solidarity" within the "collective conscience" might be a pathway towards global solidarity as cultures homogenize just as "organic solidarity" emerging from interdependent labor relationships could foster social cohesion—especially in the globalized world, where one large container ship getting stuck in the Suez Canal threatens the global supply chain. Yet both appear to have created very limited global solidarity and sometimes even led to polarization. There could be another foundation for global solidarity built upon our shared vulnerability. I suggest, for want of a better term, calling this "somatic solidarity," which is not seated in the "collective conscience," but in the "collective heart."

Somatic Solidarity

Somatic solidarity I see as a form of social cohesion that emerges in the global society and

that refers to an increasing awareness of (a) the intrinsic fragility of the human body and (b) of "humanity as one body," within the "collective heart." With its strong emphasis on the mind, seventeenth-century thinking has neglected what makes us human too: our physicality and our relationships, both fostering empathy and compassion. As the pandemic demonstrates, we are intrinsically connected and dependent on each other on a bodily or indeed physical level. Because you are ill, I might become ill. Because you are suffering, I might suffer. I exist, not because I think, but because I am a part of a web of relationships: even in disconnection, even in solitude, even in isolation. I exist because you delivered a pizza. Somatic solidarity in the sense of "humanity as one body" as part of the "collective heart" would have created a very different recent past. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014 was mostly perceived as a deadly virus that affected "them," not "us." How different would the epidemic have been treated as the "collective heart" would have urged us to think, "We are ill! Because Sierra Leone is ill, we are ill. Because Sierra Leone suffers, we suffer. We are one." We would have learned lessons that would have prepared us better for the pandemic.

The Significant Other of Humanity

If we perceive humanity as one body, our relationship with the land fundamentally changes. Global solidarity differs in another fundamental aspect from those mechanisms of solidarity creating social cohesion in national societies. For in the context of a fatherland, there is always another country to conquer, to dominate, to assimilate, to plunder. The borders and hence the identity of the fatherland are always more or less contested. The opportunity for new conquests remains open, should we need resources. But the borders of the Earth are not contested, and her resources are not limitless. Mother Earth, as the significant other of "Humanity as One Body" prompts us to examine our relationship with the land that feeds us—in terms of harmony, balance and ultimately, peace. In the process, we will be transformed. For the better. Those are, I suggest, the new "politics of impossibility." And if humanity can expand global—somatic—solidarity in our "collective heart" to the ends of the Earth, perhaps we do not need a Martian attack, after all.

Endnotes

1. Martha Van der Bly, "Pananthropoi – Towards a Society of All-Humanity," *Globality Studies Journal* 37 (September 2013), written in Spring 2006.

2. Ibid.

About the Author

Martha Van Der Bly is an actress and independent filmmaker. Her company, Rose Rebel Productions, produces films that explore themes of common humanity and shared human destiny. Previously, she was Research Fellow at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics, and Honorary Visiting Fellow of City University London. Her research has won awards from the Royal Irish Academy, the World Society Foundation in Zurich, and the Boekman Foundation in Amsterdam. She holds a PhD in sociology from Trinity College Dublin.

Panel 2:
Making It Happen

Time for a Climate Insurgency

Jeremy Brecher

Since the end of the feudal era, the world order has been largely structured by the nation-state system. Individuals have been willing to kill and die for their countries. The pursuit of individual and group interests has occurred largely within a national framework.

Nonetheless, social and political movements have often transgressed national boundaries and expressed solidarities that go beyond them. People frequently join together in social movements that embody the principle and practice of solidarity. And these movements often cut across national boundaries.

A few historical examples:

- The "Age of Democratic Revolutions" between 1760 and 1800 saw people in dozens of countries participate in uprisings and movements to establish popular control of the state. While these movements advocated national independence, there was extensive solidarity and mutual support among them.

- The international abolitionist movement spread throughout Europe and the Americas, abolished slavery in the world's major countries, and eventually made enslavement a crime worldwide.

- The rise of labor and socialist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries embodied a solidarity across national borders. The International Workingmen's Association (First International) sent money, printed leaflets, and organized boycotts in support of workers engaged in fights in countries all over Europe.

- The disarmament movement of the 1950s and 1960s spread all over the world, penetrating the supposedly impenetrable "iron curtain," establishing its independence from both Cold War "blocs," and ultimately helping bring about a ban on nuclear testing and an 80% reduction in strategic weapons.

- In the 1960s, the movement against the Vietnam War spread around the world, challenged the countries that had allied with the US in its war against Vietnam, and eventually contributed to the crisis in US policy that led to the withdrawal of troops.

- The Women's Liberation Movement, which grew out of discussions in the Civil Rights Movement, has come to contest gender inequality in every country and sphere of life around the world.

- The environmental movement spread rapidly in the late 1960s. The underlying ecological concept of the interdependence of all forms of life developed from absurdity to common sense, and environmental legislation became a global norm. The global character of the movement was exhibited by the annual Earth Day, in which tens of millions of people participated in countries around the world.

- The February 2003 protests against the US attack on Iraq drew in 15 million people for demonstrations around the world, described by the New York Times as a reminder that "there may still be two superpowers on the planet: the United States and world public opinion."

- The global justice movement coordinated action around the world and brought the attempt to form a "new world order" under the World Trade Organization to a halt in the 1999 Battle of Seattle.

- The climate movement has from the outset been global—like the global warming it contests. The student-initiated 2019 Global Climate Strike, for example, brought together 7.6 million participants in 6,000 events in 185 countries.

- When Black Lives Matter protests swept across America after the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, hundreds of thousands of people in London, Sydney, Cape Town, Rio de Janeiro, Stockholm, Tokyo, and many other communities took to the streets in solidarity.

Each of these examples illustrates the globalization of human solidarity. Why, despite the dominance of the nation-state framework, do movements arise in which solidarity transgresses nation-state boundaries?

In a world where "self-preservation" is often regarded as "the first law of life," solidarity is a form of action in which mutual aid serves as the means for realizing individual interests. Solidarity is the practice of pursuing individual ends by realizing mutual and common ends.

The process by which solidarity emerges is what, echoing the seventeenth-century Digger Gerrard Winstanley, I call "common preservation." Common preservation is the process by which people shift from strategies based on greed and self-aggrandizement to strategies that pursue self-interest by promoting common interests.

Solidarity and common preservation are likely to emerge where people discover that they are powerless to realize their ends by themselves, but that they may be able to do so by cooperation with others.

New common preservations and solidarities generally develop when people are presented a common threat or problem that can't be solved by individuals and limited groups. They experience the necessity to build new solidarities that cross national and other borders. This doesn't happen automatically, but through an active process of constructing links among people and groups who have been isolated, divided, and even antagonistic.

Such movements have repeatedly transcended national boundaries and established transnational cooperation, loyalty, and solidarity. But they have not yet transmuted the nations and the nation-state system that prevent global human cooperation to address global problems like climate change, nuclear holocaust, and injustice.

How can nation-states be not only penetrated by global forces, but also have their most destructive aspects metamorphosed by them?

Consider today's most urgent and devastating threat: climate change.

The nation-state system has helped cause and perpetuate climate destruction. National sovereignty gives states the authority to determine what can or cannot be emitted into the atmosphere in their territories; it is states that authorize the emission of climate-destroying greenhouse gas emissions. The sovereignty of nations ensures that common human interests are trumped by the authority of states—allowing governments to destroy the global

atmospheric commons without restraint from higher authority or their people. The system of sovereign nation-states generates a competition in which each state must encourage the exploitation of nature's resources or face loss of power and wealth within the competitive world order. The direct and indirect dependence of states and their officials on dominant economic actors—notably, industries that produce and use fossil fuels—often makes governments subordinate to those with an interest in perpetuating climate destruction.

To overcome these limitations, the climate movement needs to become what I have called a global nonviolent constitutional insurgency.[1]

Insurgencies are social movements, but movements of a special type: they reject current rulers' claims to legitimate authority. Insurgencies often develop from movements that initially make no such challenge to established authority, but eventually conclude that it is necessary to realize their objectives. To effectively protect the earth's climate and the future of our species, the climate protection movement may well have to become such an insurgency.

A nonviolent insurgency rejects and resists the authority of the state, but it eschews violence. Instead, it exercises power by mobilizing people for various forms of nonviolent mass action that withdraw acquiescence and cooperation from the powers that be.

A constitutional insurgency declares established laws and policies illegitimate and illegal and sets out to establish alternative law through nonviolent self-help. Destruction of the earth's climate represents a violation of the most fundamental constitutional principles; as federal judge Ann Aiken straightforwardly declared, "the right to a climate system capable of sustaining human life is fundamental to a free and ordered society." If established government won't protect that right, it is up to the people of the world to do so.

Global nonviolent constitutional insurgency is a vehicle for undermining the illegitimate authority of states. Under the public trust doctrine, all people have rights that states, whether their own or others, can't violate. All human beings have valid claims against all states that are destroying a stable climate.

Today, we can see the emergence of climate solidarity all around us. We can see the emergence of new solidarities—self-preservation transformed to common preservation. But our solidarity is still blocked by a world order based on the war of all against all. One way to overcome our thrust to mutual destruction could be to transform the global climate movement into a global climate insurgency.

Endnotes

1. The ideas presented in this contribution are developed more fully in *Common Preservation in a Time of Mutual Destruction* (Oakland: PM Press, 2021).

About the Author

Jeremy Brecher is a historian of social movements and a co-founder of the Labor Network for Sustainability. His recent books include the *Climate Insurgency Trilogy* and *Common Preservation in a Time of Mutual Destruction*.

Stepping Stones Toward Unity

Luis Cabrera

First comes the idea.

Richard Falk, in his essay "Global Solidarity: Toward a Politics of Impossibility," focuses on the idea of human solidarity as a key to global transformation. He decries ways in which ambitious reforms to the current global system are often framed as impossible, typically by elites benefiting from the fragmentary and dis-integrated global status quo. He exhorts us to rethink what could be possible, by imagining "a sense of our place in the cosmos so that it becomes our standpoint: a patriotism for humanity in which the whole becomes greater than the part, and the part is no longer the dominant organizing principle of life on the planet."

Like many others, I have found Falk's vision of global solidarity both highly instructive and inspiring. Here I want to explore reasons for tying that vision more closely to the transformation of regional and global political institutions.

First, I will note that Falk's emphasis on the idea of global solidarity resonates with transformation paths highlighted by some ambitious global institutional reformers of the past. Perhaps the most salient here is acclaimed science fiction author and world state advocate H. G. Wells (1866–1946), who indeed declared that "First comes the idea…" For Wells, it was a clearly articulated idea of global unity within a world state that would be crucial to inspiring support for it: "We have to create a vision of it, to make it seem first a possibility and then an approaching reality. This is a task that demands the work and thought of thousands of minds. We have to spread the idea of a Federal World State, as an approaching reality, throughout the world."[1]

Falk has previously championed some significant global institutional reforms. For example, in his 1975 book *A Study of Future Worlds*, he outlined a reformed UN or like set of global

institutions featuring a world parliamentary assembly with some binding legislative powers, a world executive, and a world court.[2] Later, amid the anti-corporate globalization protests of the late 1990s and early 2000s, he and Andrew Strauss argued for an initially advisory global parliamentary assembly, as a way to enable global civil society groups to have a much stronger voice in international politics.[3]

In the present essay, however, he is focused almost exclusively on the development of a broader global ethos, a shared idea and vision of global human solidarity. The call to embrace such an ethos resonates with his previous work on the ideal of the "citizen pilgrim." Citizen pilgrims are agents in a system still dominated by sovereign states who nevertheless adopt an orientation to global solidarity and press states to act more humanely and justly. His most recent book, a memoir, is titled *Public Intellectual: The Life of a Citizen Pilgrim*.[4] In the present essay, the call could be seen as aiming at an even broader global transformation of attitudes and orientations.

I believe we can honor and affirm such a vision while seeking to advance a more institutionally oriented conception of solidarity and citizenship beyond the state, especially at the regional level in the near term. The European Union, for example, offers an unmatched laboratory for exploring, in Falk's terms, the limits of the "feasible, desirable, and necessary" in a set of institutions encompassing more than 500 million persons. Indeed, the idea of such a unified Europe animated thinkers long before Wells penned his first world state treatises.

The EU in practice gives an idea of how common institutions beyond the state could deal in common with such problems as the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted by Falk. For example, while the European Commission's early vaccine procurement was criticized, actual vaccine purchase and distribution was coordinated in common, as were grants and loans to help member states recover.[5] And, while a survey of EU residents found critical views of the EU's pandemic response overall, respondents were much more critical of their own states' responses and affirmed the view that EU membership was a positive.[6]

The EU again serves as a laboratory, not some categorical model for regional institutional development. It offers, however, an eminently concrete institutional context in which to

promote the sorts of aims that Falk identifies with the development of solidarity across borders. Its common trans-state institutions offer important targets or mechanisms for trans-state collective action, and for seeking to advance in common the vital interests of persons from more than two dozen states.

Efforts to develop shared institutions have emerged in various other regions, backed by organizations including South America's Mercosur, the Economic Community of West African States, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Caribbean Community, and numerous others. Each has faced challenges related to resources, the will of powerful member states, etc., in achieving regional governance aims. Each represents, however, not an institutional imaginary but concrete efforts at promoting solidarity across states and promoting the interests of broader sets of persons in common. Each provides institutions around which—or against which—to orient some cross-border solidarity efforts, and each provides a distinctive laboratory for exploring challenges to and possibilities for regional citizenship and solidarity in various parts of the world.

Fully global institutions with solidaristic potential remain more in the realm of the idea, but institutional ideas about promoting human rights recognition, development, human security, etc., are well established after some seventy-five years of trial and error at the United Nations. For example, proposals for a global parliamentary assembly, whether created as part of the UN system or initially separate from it, have been offered by a range of authors, including again Falk and Strauss.[7] Such proposals provide potential common ground around which to orient efforts to promote solidarity and common action, and to enable further collective action at the global level if some such body could be launched.

Adopting a somewhat more institutionally oriented approach to human solidarity—something less than Wells' comprehensive World State but more explicitly focused on the potential to transform existing and possibly emerging suprastate institutions—could be a useful complement to Falk's call to expand our view of the globally possible. It could provide discrete targets for collective action and give a clearer idea of how the idea of human solidarity might be advanced.

Endnotes

1. H.G. Wells, *The Salvaging of Civilization: The Probable Future of Mankind* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 82.

2. Richard Falk, *A Study of Future Worlds* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 228–75.

3. See Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss, *A Global Parliament: Essays and Articles* (Berlin: Committee for a Democratic U.N., 2011). The book collects articles on the topic published from 1997–2010.

4. Richard Falk, *Public Intellectual: The Life of a Citizen Pilgrim* (Gardena, CA: Clarity Press, 2021).

5. See International Monetary Fund, "Policy Responses to Covid-19," accessed June 29, 2021, https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#E.

6. Jon Henley, "Europeans' Confidence in EU Hit by Coronavirus Response," *The Guardian*, June 9, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/09/europeans-confidence-in-eu-hit-by-coronavirus-response.

7. See Falk and Strauss, *A Global Parliament*, 89–97.

About the Author

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Hope and Action

Zillah Eisenstein

In this time of planetary upheaval—punishing inequalities; sexual violence; global turmoil of migrants and refugees; exploding climate crises; the wars in Ethiopia, Syria, Yemen, and Palestine; and COVID-19—how does one imagine and think of possibility? Of hope? For me, solidarity has no limits, nor does its imaginaries.

Hope is not an idea, but a practice. It is always in process. It remakes itself daily. When I am asked to think about the possibility of a global solidarity emerging, I would say that it already is. Just as pain and suffering cover the globe, so, too, do the fight back and resistance. Women of every kind have taken to the streets in the hundreds of thousands demanding an end to sexual violation, especially rape—in war and in domestic confines—in Myanmar, Chile, Argentina, Peru, India, and Palestine. There are massive demonstrations across the globe demanding reproductive justice and access to abortion. It is happening, but you have to see it to know this. The West, if there is a West, has maybe the most work to do towards building the possibilities of solidarities.

We—meaning all of us, wherever we are, however different our individual and national experiences are—are closer to our own suffering, and others', today. In the US, more of us, especially white people, are feeling the need for reparations towards Blacks—to repair the foundational brutality of white supremacist slavery. Those of us involved in this work believe in possibility because we are part of the practice. Pain and suffering connect us to our own humanity and that of others. It becomes a bond for resisting oppression and claiming liberation.

In this moment, be cautious if you think you will know what solidarity looks like, in any familiar sense. So much is under siege, so much is being fought for by those in power to hold onto

their ebbing privilege. It is impossible to know exactly what might be leading to success and new mobilizations towards freedom. But much is happening.

Small steps matter. Small changes may also be big. How do we know when we are approaching a tipping point towards solidarity? The foundational nuggets of global racist patriarchy have been exposed in new ways. Privileges are crumbling. James Baldwin knew this all those years ago. White people will at some point have to look at themselves and know what they have done. That is happening to many of us.

COVID-19 opens portals so to speak on every system that was already crumbling: health care, service workers, houselessness, hunger, the academy, white supremacy. These portals cannot be shut. Why? Because those of us who are not afraid at looking at the horror and the truth are fearless. There is nothing more to hide because it is exposed and we are ready for what comes next. Whatever that is.

George Floyd was a small moment in the horrific history of racist America. The offerings of Black culture on online streaming platforms open a world of horrifying truths if we are willing to look. Germany has apologized for its racist destruction in Namibia. France is reckoning with its complicity with the Rwandan genocide. The US is beginning talks of reparations for Blacks. None of it is enough, but it is a process that allows for a new camaraderie.

None of these moments alone are enough. But it is also true that nothing remains the same. Reparations cannot repair our indecent capitalist racist patriarchal system, but reparations can begin the process of abolition and a new solidarity. Create the next world with these new partial steps.

Insurgent small steps shift the ground upon which we find our footing. Do not expect to recognize what a global solidarity will look like. It will be dispersed and concentrated. It will be jagged and hurtful. It will enrage. It will unsettle, and we will have to forgive the truth-tellers. The truth consists of the fearlessness to know ourselves, to see ourselves with others in our shared humanity. That demands a camaraderie that is inviolable.

To know that fearlessness is part of living justly makes us radically courageous. And courage is the mightiest thing any of us have. Courage is hope as a practice. Once we feel this camaraderie with others, solidarity is unstoppable.

So when you wonder whether a global solidarity is possible, ask yourself if you are ready to be a part of creating possibility and camaraderie. Do not think about camaraderie as though it is about someone else. Make it about yourself. Create the solidarity. Find your courage and share it with others in whatever liberation struggle in which you are a part. The possibility is the practice.

Not everyone is going to be a radical abolitionist for justice. But those of us who are, are fierce enough to make the changes and do the work. Stop worrying about the haters. And find your truthful love of our humanity—each and every one of us—abled, disabled, cis and trans and bi and nonbinary and Black and Brown and Yellow and White. From everywhere.

Global solidarity is coming because the planet demands it.

About the Author

Zillah Eisenstein is a political thinker, writer, and activist who is always seeking new anti-racist socialist feminist pathways. A Professor Emerita at Rochester College, she is the author of numerous books and articles on the long and continuing struggles for social, racial, economic, environmental, gender, sexual, and bodily justice by women of all colors across the planet. Her latest book is *Abolitionist Socialist Feminism: Radicalizing the Next Revolution*.

Organizing Across Place

David Featherstone

Richard Falk's commentary is a welcome contribution to opening up the horizons of political imaginaries in this difficult political conjuncture. Here I want to think about three key issues that will hopefully push elements of this agenda in useful and productive ways.

Firstly, while I think the ambition of Falk's account is important, I would question the framing he uses in relation to thinking about "human solidarity." To get at some of the interdependencies that he wishes to foreground here, especially in the context of the "Anthropocene," it is useful to position solidarities as always necessarily constructed through relations and connections which make it more akin to a "more than human" achievement. This also usefully positions solidarities as interventions in and struggles over the different ways in which social and environmental relations are configured. This is a crucial move if we are to rethink solidarity as a practice for urgent, contemporary struggles such as those for climate justice. As Mukul Kumar has emphasized in relation to recent struggles over the politics of coal in Tamil Nadu, tracing the different ways in which contestation is "assembled" can usefully draw attention to both the ways through which solidarities are constructed through intervening in all sorts of unequal social and environmental relations and the agency of different marginal groups.[1]

Secondly, I would argue that it is necessary to consider more carefully some of the ways in which actually existing forms of solidarity and internationalism can prefigure the kind of global imaginaries of solidarity that Falk conjures here. In this respect, it is also important to perhaps think in more nuanced ways about the different geographies and spaces through which global solidarities might be constructed and built. While I appreciate why Falk wishes to counterpose "globalism and human community" with "the realities of localism and tribal community," it is necessary to go beyond such stark oppositions. It is crucial to recognize that solidarities, even global ones, need to be built from somewhere.

I worry that a vision of solidarity which aspires to "globalism" is one which seeks to transcend rather than be worked through the messy realities of particular places and contexts. Following the work of the geographer Doreen Massey, I think it is through intervening in the ways in which places are connected with other places and the terms on which they become hubs of different relations across space that many actually existing "global" solidarities are envisioned and practiced.[2] A key recent example here is the ways in which dockers at various ports in Italy, South Africa, and the United States have responded to the call of Palestinian unions for global solidarity.

As Nikolas Kosmatopoulos has noted, "Italian dockworkers in the ports of Ravenna and Livorno refused to load ships belonging to ZIM, the Israeli transport giant. The trade union L'Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) said that the Livorno port will not be an accomplice in the massacre of Palestinians as the cargo contained weapons and explosives that could be used to kill the Palestinian population."[3] There have been similar actions by South African dockworkers in Durban and at the Port of Oakland, both of which have long histories of international solidarity, particularly during the apartheid era.[4] What is significant here is the way in which such global solidarities are produced, not by an overarching global vision, but by situated actions which intervene in the global infrastructures and connections shaped through these ports. Such actions stress the importance of building such global solidarities "from below" rather than through an appeal to globalist institutions.

Finally, Falk's reflections raise the question of the relation between solidarity and political antagonisms, i.e., what antagonisms might be generated through which progressive solidarities are shaped and how might they cohere. This is a particularly crucial question given the ways in which intensely reactionary forms of racialized right-wing populism/far-right politics are seeking to hegemonize some of the ways in which key grievances become articulated. This also raises questions about the ways in which different antagonisms might be generated in ways which can be the focus of different progressive alliances which might shape aspects of global solidarity.

Take the figure of Winston Churchill, raised here by Falk as someone whose investments in colonialism meant he was blind to the potential impacts of anti-colonialism, despite being a

"great" war-time leader. Churchill is an interesting example of a figure who speaks to some of the tensions of the current moment. Churchill remains reviled by working-class communities in places like South Wales for his alleged role in sending troops as part of the repression of striking miners before World War I, and his role as a key proponent and practitioner of colonialism is contested in many places.[5] There is also increasing recognition of the ways in which his racism was not incidental to, but absolutely constitutive, of his politics.

The memory of Churchill, however, has been central to the reassertion of imperial articulations of Britishness in the wake of Brexit by the Conservatives and others on the right.[6] The different ways in which Churchill is contested in relation to the consequences of his actions in different parts of the world, however, suggest ways in which solidarities might be articulated by those who oppose how his memory is invoked. Crucial here is the ways in which opposition to Churchill's articulations of colonialism can be linked to his violent, classed actions within the UK, highlighting continuities rather than differences across increasingly potent divisions between those constructed as "white working-class" communities in post-industrial parts of the UK and multiethnic articulations of solidarity.

Linking more explicitly to questions of transition, there are also key ways in which the antagonisms shaped by movements for climate justice open up different lenses on the practices in which solidarities might be shaped. This also speaks to the necessity for global visions of solidarity to engage seriously with the unequal geographies of power that have long shaped uneven relations between the global North and South. What is significant about emergent forms of climate justice politics, such as the organizing work of the Wretched of the Earth collective, is the way some of their approaches to solidarity make these uneven relations a point of departure for how they envision forms of global solidarity.[7] Foregrounding these uneven relations and ways of engaging with them in productive ways is central to delivering the promise of global solidarity as so powerfully articulated by Falk's intervention.

Endnotes

1. Mukul Kumur, "Disassembling Coal: Finance Capital, Environmental Law, and the Right to Information in South India," *Antipode* 53, no. 4 (2021): 124–142.

2. See, for example, Doreen Massey World City (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007).

3. Nikolas Kosmatopoulos "Intervention – 'Block the Boat, Float the Flotilla': Palestine, Surplus, and Solidarity," *Antipode Online*, June 21, 2021, https://antipodeonline.org/2021/06/21/block-the-boat/.

4. Peter Cole, *Dockworker Power: Race and Activism in Durban and the San Francisco Bay Area* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018).

5. There continues to be debates about the specific role of Churchill in relation to the repression of striking/rioting miners at Tonypandy in 1911 and the shooting of two young men at Llanelli during the railway workers' strike in the same year. For detailed discussions, see Anthony O'Brien, "Churchill and the Tonypandy Riots," *Welsh History Review* 17, no. 1 (1994) 67–99; Dai Smith, *In the Frame: Memory in Society Wales, 1910-1920* (Swansea: Parthian, 2010). In terms of his broader colonial role, his response to the Bengal famine of 1943 is particularly contested. As Madhusree Mukerjee notes, "Time and again Winston Churchill chose to privilege the comfort and economic security of British citizens over the survival of colonial subjects, making a series of decisions that worsened the Bengal famine"; see "Bengal Famine of 1943: An Appraisal of the Famine Inquiry Commission," *Economic and Political Weekly* 49, no. 11 (2014): 74.

6. Priyamvada Gopal, "Why Can't Britain Handle the Truth about Winston Churchill?," *The Guardian*, March 17, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/mar/17/why-cant-britain-handle-the-truth-about-winston-churchill.

7. See, for example, "An Open Letter to Extinction Rebellion," *Red Pepper*, May 3, 2019, https://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-open-letter-to-extinction-rebellion/.

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Spiritual Foundations of One World

Catherine Keller

We have been meditating on Richard Falk's question "Can Human Solidarity Globalize?" At first, it sounds straightforward. But as we think together, it takes on the hint of a Zen koan. An answer of "yes" is barraged by its "but…but…but" so quickly as to empty into impossibility. I suppose that is the point of a meditation on "politics as the art of the impossible." Yet the purpose of this art is to liberate the possible.

I would start here: inasmuch as human solidarity does not globalize, it does not exist. A solidarity of the human—the human as such, as humanity, presumably not just as these or those anthropic clusters—is by definition global. For this species has long been spread around the globe. If therefore there is to be *human* solidarity, the solidarity of a species across its differences, it would be *global* solidarity. This hardly exists. Nor therefore does human solidarity. Human solidarity, as not divided into those "parts" as "only enclaves of space on world maps" or into solidifications of one human collective over against another, is necessarily planetwide. And that is true even before we take on the ecological meaning of globe as planet.

So in order to globalize, we face the possible impossibility of the challenge that now confronts us as a species: the challenge to come into our own as creatures of this planet, as creatures whose failure of solidarity with each other, and (as it turns out) with the rest of the species making up the life of the planet, the planet cannot much longer abide.

So the urgency of the contemporary global crisis of climate and therefore of the human itself does mount toward the impossible. This century comes framed in meditations on "the impossible possibility of the im/possible" (Derrida). The slash cracks the impossible open to "The Great Transition." Even the language needed to express the transition struggles for solidarity. "Globality" must constantly be distinguished from neoliberalism and at the same time from

modern universalisms that unify an empowered "we" against some not-quite-human: of race, of gender, of nationality or gender; or from a universal that homogenizes human differences. We struggle for language that makes clear that such globalism is pitted against individualism, not individuality; that such solidarity thrives on the diversity not just of groups but of persons; that to globalize solidarity, far from reducing difference, vastly enhances it.

For difference itself is relation: we exist only in the relationality of our differences. And we thrive only in recognizing and strengthening our *entangled difference*. And then—without fear of our humanity being reduced—we can embrace its entanglement with the multiple layers of the nonhuman. And here also language threatens solidarity: Falk argues for a "responsible anthropocentrism"; I argue that anthropocentrism is at the root of our irresponsibility—even the biblical root of our "dominion." Yet I recognize the strategic value of redefining anthropocentrism as an Anthropos in whose center all the layers of our evolution and tangles of our material ecology meet. So the portal through the im/possible can keep broadening under pressure of all of our differences.

I wrote *The Cloud of the Impossible* in recognition of how the density of the challenges we face occlude the vision whereby we might address them.[1] Yet the phrase is a citation of the fifteenth-century polymath Nicolaus of Cusa, who is speaking precisely of vision. "And the more that cloud of impossibility is recognized as obscure and impossible, the more truly the necessity shines forth and the less veiled it appears and draws near."[2] There glows in the darkness of the cloud possibilities opened by that very necessity. Perhaps even today? Does the luminous "darkness" not shed its unwhite light on the necessities we face? Does the vision of which Falk laments the foreclosure begin in such darkness?

Yet Cusa's "cloud of the impossible"—and mine—is of theological origin. Given the way that religious exclusivisms and supernaturalisms feed the politics of international right wings, how can theology strengthen the solidarities of a "politics of the impossible"? Most other respondents work outside of those religions. Yet some, like Richard Falk, include some gesture toward the religions or toward spirituality in the language of solidarity—and of "cosmic awe." Just as Falk says, "gestating within the cultural bosom of world civilizations and world religions have been subversive ideas of global solidarity."

Thus, as one of endless examples, the Parliament of World Religions earlier this summer sent out word of a new deployment of their "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic," which from 1993 has worked across those world religions for social, political, and ecological justice. And even the present, largely secular readership will have some familiarity with Pope Francis' Laudato Si, the encyclical responding to "the cry of the poor, the cry of the earth." As to the decades of struggle involving countless sub-publics of liberation theology—Latin American, US Black, Asian—and of feminist, womanist, and ecological theologies, these religious left wings have had insufficient but immense impact. They work in deep solidarity with secular activist movements. The current work of the Institute for Ecological Civilization, based in LA and working internationally (with, for example, remarkable influence in China) grows from process theology, based on a science-yoked cosmological vision.[3] In other words, a universalism of universe; a cosmopolitanism of cosmos. Theological metaphors of the divine or the sacred exercise deep motivational power across the (shrinking but still) massive proportions of Christians in the US, of those who identify as religious in the world. The religious left is mobilized by those of us who work, then, not against religion itself but against the conservative presumptions and right-wing uses of religion.

The Christian right has been particularly galvanized by the biblical prophecy of the Apocalypse. But the secular left can also be seduced by an End of the World despair—because the possibility for global solidarity may really soon slam shut. But if it has not yet, to ignore present possibilities is to betray them. My new book *Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy and Other Last Chances* deploys the ancient imaginary against contemporary cultures of both denialism and nihilism.[4] The biblical prophecy rages phantasmagorically against global imperialism and economics, promising against the odds the eco-urban utopia of the New Jerusalem. The word "apokalypsis," after all, means not "end of the world" but "unveiling"—dis/closing not closure. The crisis itself presses possibilities out of their opposite. Falk—with no biblical inflection—offers the best rendition of this global opening: "Transition is not off in the distance or only in dreamscapes or science fiction imaginaries [or, I add, archaic visions]; it is happening around us if we only learn to open our eyes and hearts to the possibilities now emerging." May I say "amen"?

Endnotes

1. Catherine Keller, *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

2. Nicholas of Cusa, *On Learned Ignorance*, 1440, cited in Ibid., 99.

3. For more on the Institute, see https://ecociv.org/.

4. Catherine Keller, *Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy and Other Last Chances* (Ossining, NY: Orbis Press, 2021).

About the Author

Catherine Keller is Professor of Constructive Theology in the Graduate Division of Religion of Drew University. Her work on theology covers a spectrum of dimensions: ecofeminist, process, pluralist, political, and philosophical. Her books include *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism and Self*; *Political Theology of the Earth: Our Planetary Emergency and the Struggle for a New Public*; and *Facing Apocalypse: Climate, Democracy and Other Last Chances*. She is the co-editor of *Postcolonial Theologies*; *Common Good/s: Ecology, Economy and Political Theology*; and *Entangled Worlds: Religion, Science and the New Materialism*. She holds a PhD in the philosophy of religion and theology from Claremont Graduate School.

Cultivating Unity Consciousness

Jing Lin

Global solidarity is based on unity consciousness. Unity consciousness is a level of vibration that goes beyond the self and reaches the heart and souls of all beings and existence. Unity consciousness manifests as the sense of oneness, compassion, love, and respect, both for human beings and for nature. This unity consciousness can be fostered, cultivated, and elevated. It is like skills that can be learned, acquired, and applied. Eastern philosophy is based on an ontology that we all have this vital life energy—called qi, prana, Ki, or ruach in various names in various traditions. This energy is the force that creates the universe, and that in fact makes our life a miracle. Religious and spiritual teachers engaged in the practice of meditation through which they built up this energy and achieved a unity consciousness. They therefore called for people to embrace love, care, respect, and forgiveness as the foundation for our global brotherhood and sisterhood. They entered this unity consciousness through meditation, through which to harbor the immensely powerful qi and to harbor virtues as they reach the Dao consciousness.[1]

In the Eastern wisdom tradition, qi is this vital life energy that should be cultivated through meditation, and in fact doing good for the world is treated like technologies that attracts and returns this creative energy to oneself in a vibrating, reciprocal, intelligent universe. With accumulation of this energy, latent abilities in human beings are revealed, allowing us to see and hear a lot more, reaching understanding and realities of higher dimensions. When we have elevated our energy, we elevate our awareness and resonance capability, which allows us to experience interbeing and embody the knowing that love is the force propelling all existence in the universe. When we come to this consciousness, we realize that our life's purpose and goals are much bigger than what we hang on to as materialistic goals, and a sense of awe and respect, and a sense of gratitude are bred for all beings and existence.

are much bigger than what we hang on to as materialistic goals, and a sense of awe and respect, and a sense of gratitude are bred for all beings and existence.

Wisdom traditions around the world all contain the teaching of methods for cultivation of this vital life energy, and they all emphasize the simultaneous cultivation of virtues. Virtues and energy are interrelated, which gives rise to wisdom. In a state of unity consciousness, harming others feels like harming oneself, and punching holes in the Earth feels like punching holes in one's own body. This experience of co-suffering, as well as the experience of mutual joy, is the foundation of global solidarity.

People must see the benefit of meditation and cultivation of virtue before they want to change course from grabbing power and wealth. Hence, we need to enter a new era seeing "miracles" as imaginable and achievable, to greatly expand our ability to sense the greater reality, that is, our spiritual being is real, just as real as our physical being, and that we have these multiple dimensions extending way beyond the ego-self. In my understanding and in my own research, all the spiritual traditions around the world aim for discovering, revealing this spiritual being which has incredible power. One is called a Buddha when one can move the universe with one's heart (a compassionate heart for all beings and existence). One becomes a sage when one harbors the creative energy of Dao. Alchemists have explored the secret for living a very, very long life, looking for the Spring Water for longevity and immortality. It is time we all become alchemists having a much longer vision of life and a much higher perspective about our role in the universe. People like Albert Einstein sense that the universe is a consciousness, and that the universe is moral and intelligent, and that we have a great role to play in the evolution of the universe. We can be greater than ourselves.

So, in order for us to have global solidarity, we need to explore the secrets of life; we need to go way beyond the five senses that we have relied on to see the world and feel the world. We need to cultivate the ability to resonate with the universe, to cultivate the energy that creates all existence, and to sense others as ourselves, as sacred and intelligent beings who are playing a part in the song of love of the universe.

We are hopeful if we are willing to undergo an inner transformation, searching from within for wisdom and love, and kindness and humility. In fact, we already have all the know-how from

our wisdom traditions, from the indigenous spiritual practices. We need to work to bolster our vital life energy through contemplative meditation and understand the universe structure as grounded in the virtue of cooperation and interdependence, and that doing good for others is circulating the vital life energy back to oneself.

I see hope in our world: already many people are joining the momentum to find solutions to the problems of the world through inner work, to cultivate their vital life energy, and to broaden the scope of their work and life, and to embody love and respect for people and nature. We can actually enhance the possibility for global solidarity by adding to the energy that is already being built up for unity consciousness. Global solidarity is an embodied state of being; it is not about getting more for ourselves and for others; it is about being in harmony with the love energy that guides our life and the universe. The whole universe cannot sustain and cannot function without the guiding principle of mutual support, cooperation, yielding, and giving; so is the case of our world and our relationship with nature. If we have a global consciousness like this, we have global solidarity. We can redesign school curriculum and programs that fully incorporate meditation and cultivating virtues into all aspects of learning and being. The new form of education seeks to integrate the body, mind, heart, and spirit. It aims to understand the secret of life and maintain the deep curiosity for the wonder of the universe.

Endnotes

1. For more on this, see Tom Culham and Jing Lin, *Daoist Cultivation of Qi and Virtue for Life, Wisdom, and Learning* (New York: Palgrave-Springer, 2020); Jing Lin, "From Self-Cultivation to Social Transformation: The Confucian Embodied Pathways and Educational Implications," in *Confucianism and Education*, eds. Yiufeng Liu and Wen Ma (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 169-182); Jing Lin, "Enlightenment from Body-Spirit Integration: Dunhuang's Buddhist Cultivation Pathways and Educational Implications," in *The Dunhuang Grottos and Global Education: Philosophical, Spiritual, Scientific, and Aesthetic Insights*, ed. Xu Di (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 113-131).

About the Author

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The Need for Overarching Organization

Francine Mestrum

Richard Falk's introduction puts the finger on the sore spots: there is indeed a global and broad awareness of our interdependence, but no consequential actions to save humanity; the current system is indeed destructive; the way forward is not localism and tribalism, but a need to engage globalism and human community. And finally, we need to stop the foreclosure of our imagination.

How easy it seems to say these words, but how difficult it is to act accordingly!

The problem is not only our inability to think the impossible, but also that the interests of States and peoples conflict in different ways, making solidarity difficult.

Raison d'Etat

We used to think of international and global affairs—and cooperation—at the level of States and international organizations. However, States do not always defend the interests of their populations and have developed their own State interests. They have a "raison d'état," and this is considered more important than people's interests. Hence the now somewhat "old-fashioned" crime of "treason," when patriotic values are not respected. States are supposed to defend the collective interests, and people are supposed to help and protect the State whenever it was threatened from outside. This was the old basis of the social contract. In today's world, patriotic values do not have the same importance anymore. State interests have been delinked from people's interests.

Today's State actions are not necessarily in favor of their own people; they can be in favor of corporations or merely the ambitious aims of their leaders. Examples are plain to see: from the United States to China, over to Venezuela and Myanmar.

olidarity between States does exist, but it must be taken with a grain of salt. The vaccine diplomacy of China, for example, cannot be delinked from the country's geopolitical interests, nor can the decisions of landlocked countries in the United Nations to base their votes on whale fishing on development aid.

From People to People

People do show real solidarity with each other, at the national level with social security and/or insurance systems (with a role for the State) and beyond borders with help for the poor, for COVID victims, for refugees and asylum seekers, and with many charitable actions at all different levels.

Global solidarity is also organized by thousands of philanthropic private funds; though again, these are not always exempt from other motivations linked to profits and taxes.

Many other groups have tried to get organized at the global level, from trade unions—with a real organization and with solidarity—to political families, sectoral movements like feminists, ecologists, and others. Some of them come together in events like the World Social Forum. This solidarity is extremely difficult to organize, since too many people never look beyond borders.

States and People

There have been various attempts to shift the solidarity from States to people, or to combine them, such as in the interesting concepts of human security and human poverty developed by the United Nations Development Program.

Socialist countries are masters of people-centered solidarity between States, such as the medical aid given by Cuba (though it is paid for by receiving countries and an important source of foreign exchange) and the already mentioned vaccine diplomacy of China. As for the countries of "real socialism" in Central and Eastern Europe, the formal solidarity with brother nations quickly dwindled with the fall of the Soviet regime.

State and people's interests often collide. While governments need resources for their policies and may accept extractivism, people may rightly oppose the destruction of their environment and livelihoods. The cases of Ecuador and Bolivia are telling in this respect.

olidarity can also be qualified. Social movements may criticize domestic policies of countries like Venezuela or North Korea, but will—and should—oppose all imperialist attempts of intervention.

A Conundrum for Progressive Forces

These forces of state-centered, people-centered, and mixed solidarity constantly intersect and can hinder or favor real solidarity.

The main characteristic of solidarity is reciprocity, and as long as too few people and too few States are willing to see this reciprocity become concrete, the problem—from colonialism to white supremacy—will remain.

Civil society organizations have been trying for many years to organize for global solidarity. But many of the attempts have bitterly failed. While there was a solidarity fund in the World Social Forum, it did not last for long, while its "horizontal" way of working without any agency made it impossible for structural and long-term solidarity to emerge.

State-level solidarity as envisaged at the UN and other multilateral organizations is also failing because of conflicting interests and a lack of political willingness to act. Even in the more structured European Union, solidarity is extremely difficult to achieve, though the most recent COVID-fund is an extraordinary example of mutual aid.

The only organizations that really succeeded have been the trade unions. Such organizing was imperfect and very difficult, but it has existed and some parts of it remain. It can be an example for other social movements that are now often too afraid of structural cooperation.

It is this confusion between States and people on the one hand, and the fear of organizational hierarchies on the other, that make it so difficult to organize resistance against the destructive effects of current policies, be it at the social or at the environmental level. Poverty, child labor, and inequalities are growing again, while climate change and the loss of biodiversity are direct threats to our survival.

Yet, real solutions will need organization and solidarity, inevitably. As long as States and social movements do not accept this, the road continues to go downward.

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Francine Mestrum is chairwoman of Global Social Justice, an association for transformative universal social protection and the common good. Her research concerns the social dimension of globalization, poverty, inequality, social protection, public services, and gender, with a special focus on the social commons. She is an active member of the International Council of the World Social Forum and of the International Organizing Committee of the Asia Europe People's Forum. Her latest book is *The Social Commons: Rethinking Social Justice in Post-Neoliberal Societies*. She holds a PhD in development studies from the University of Brussels.

Capitalist Crisis, Radical Opportunity

Valentine M. Moghadam

Richard Falk's eloquent essay asks us to make the leap from "the politics of the possible" to "a politics of impossibility" by imagining and crafting a "moral epistemology to achieve responsible anthropocentrism" by engaging "globalism and human community." But how do we make that happen? Here I offer a complementary perspective that shows how capitalist crises (of profitability or legitimacy or both) have led to collective action (revolutions, social movements) which in turn has sometimes compelled states and ruling elites to enact people-oriented welfarist policies. Let's note, however, that since the 1980s, the ruling elites have refrained from enacting such policies; instead, they have welcomed growing income inequalities and enjoyed their own, expansive political power and economic privileges.

Triggered in part by capital's need to expand (as Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*), the first globalization wave of the late nineteenth century entailed colonialism and imperialism. But it also generated a wave of revolutionary activism, as well as the expansion of workers' movements, trade unions, and socialist parties. In response, and to sideline socialist internationalism, German Chancellor Bismarck laid the legislative foundations for the first welfare state. The Great Depression was a major crisis for the capitalist order; in the US, the Franklin Roosevelt administration adopted redistributive measures and state regulation of markets—although this, too, was a way of mitigating the growing appeal of socialism and of communist parties.

The post-WWII era should have been one of global solidarity and common humanity, given the enormous sacrifices of the Soviet Union in the war against fascism, but Cold War ideology and corporate interests put the world on a different track. Still, statesmen and activists in the"Third World" and the socialist bloc sought to engender a new form of global solidarity

through intellectual and commercial exchanges, as well as the promotion of a New International Economic Order. (Some scholars have termed this "the second wave of globalization," albeit a non-capitalist one.)

The NIEO was resisted by the US and allies from the start, but its end came with the structural crisis of the 1970s, which was "resolved" by the turn away from Keynesianism and toward a neoliberal form of capitalist globalization, promoted by the US, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. In the interregnum came such morbid symptoms as Islamist movements, America's New Religious Right, and the US assaults on Iraq.

The deficits of the neoliberal capitalist model were laid bare by the 2007-08 financial crisis and subsequent Great Recession; in response, a new wave of global protests ensued—against the "1%," against austerity measures, against the privatization and degradation of public services. The Arab Spring was one such popular response.

This time, there were no concessions on the economic justice or anti-militarist fronts, and thus the capitalist system's resilience continued. Indeed, the financialization that began with imperialism and took off with neoliberalism has now been accompanied by a rampant form of information technology and digitization that threaten jobs and personal privacy while also enabling drone warfare and cyberattacks. Not coincidentally, the new technologies have made billionaires of the tech companies' major shareholders—many of whom circumvent taxation. Perversely, the billionaires have become richer during the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. Yes, the system is rigged, and it always has been.

In *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi wrote that "unless the alternative to the social setup is a plunge into utter destruction, no crudely selfish class can maintain itself in the lead." Today's ruling elites are indeed that "crudely selfish class," but they seem incapable of recognizing the need for change. Nor does there appear to be an alternative global project in the making. In the past, many of the global movements that arose following capitalist crises were characterized by both a common set of values and goals and a propensity to strategize. Today's movements are more fluid, less coordinated, and focused on specific issues rather than a wide-ranging critique of capitalist globalization and acknowledgement of the interconnected nature of militarism and war,

corporate privilege, climate change, labor exploitation, racial injustice, and hyper-masculinities.

Meanwhile, the US seems intent on maintaining its hegemony—witness the persistence of US military spending (4% of GDP; 58% of discretionary spending) and its numerous military bases across the globe. Instead of the 0.7% of GDP allocated to international development, the US resorts to its usual bullying tactics of imposing punishing economic sanctions on developing countries while coddling Israel with military grants, and of enforcing harsh immigration policies. Can our disparate movements coalesce around a broad program for peace, justice, and international cooperation?

In 2014, Massachusetts Peace Action, of which I am a board member, produced a document called "A Foreign Policy for All," criticizing the military-industrial complex and calling for nuclear disarmament, peaceful coexistence, a strengthened UN, peacebuilding at home and abroad, and other goals; it also offered a political strategy for change that included priority areas for movement-building. Similarly, groups like the Justice Democrats and Sunrise combine devastating critiques of the status quo with a political plan to move the Democratic Party to the left. Can we dare imagine a future when income and wealth flow not to hedge fund managers and big shareholders but to essential workers and their families? When the well-being of people and the planet take precedence over profits and arms sales?

We have no shortage of meaningful and progressive ideas and proposals for the Great Transition —proposals that are grounded in a recognition of what is feasible, what is necessary, and what is desirable (as Richard Falk advises), but we need more coordinated action. The ruling elites are implacably opposed to our proposals, and our movements have yet to demonstrate political will and commitment to create (recreate?) those bonds of international solidarity and programs for the desired transition from our current era of chaos, injustice, militarism, and inequality to a sustainable and socially just world order. It remains to be seen if the global pandemic triggers the sort of structural crisis that compels states to make people-oriented investments. If that opportunity arises, our movements must be prepared to coalesce and act for systemic change.

About the Author

Valentine M. Moghadam is Professor of Sociology and International Affairs at Northeastern University. Her current areas of research include globalization; transnational social movements and networks; economic citizenship; and gender, development, and women's movements in the Middle East and North Africa. Her books include *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*, the award-winning *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks*, and *Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement*. She holds a PhD in sociology from American University.

Orienting Toward a Shared Future

Lester Edwin J. Ruiz

Despite its seeming decline, especially in the US, COVID-19 continues to dominate the public horizon, and as it does, it reveals the historic infirmities of the "old normal" not just in the areas of economy, health, governance, environment, and culture, but also in politics and public discourse. The pandemic-like "old normal" has unevenly plagued our world for at least the past five hundred years wherein peoples of our planet continue to be (1) dispersed, displaced, and dislocated; (2) their identities racialized and ethnicized; (3) as well as gendered and sexualized; (4) their lives commodified and pathologized; (5) their contexts militarized, securitized, and weaponized; and (6) their bodies incarcerated, disabled, erased, or forgotten.

Any discussion of the prospects of global solidarity, it seems to me, must start with the consequences wrought by these multiple pandemics. We need to keep asking: What do these multiple pandemics, and the normative and aspirational responses to them, look like? What analytics are required? What learning, teaching, and research are needed? What engagements are demanded? What behavioral and institutional changes are necessary? Or to put it in the language of UNESCO, what does the "Next Normal" look like, especially one that is oriented towards global solidarity in the service of peace, justice, and sustainability—with a sense of a shared future(s)?

Orienting Practices

There are at least four orienting practices that might help us along the way to global solidarity.

First, the practice of deliberation. Deliberation cannot be reduced to mere speech. It encompasses the whole range of participative practices that recognize and affirm not only the diversity of institutions, celebrating difference as constitutive of community, but also of

meaningful and direct participation in the construction of global solidarity. Here, "community" has less to do with the aggregation of groups based exclusively on racial/ethnic, gender, class, sexual orientation, or disciplinary identities or solidarities, and more with the sites of engagement where human beings recognize and affirm their mutual obligations and relationships while simultaneously accepting norms of tolerance and principled inclusion.

Second, the practice of creating, nurturing, and defending "the common," that is, the res publica—the "public thing." The "common" is the space for difference carved out by deliberating communities as they seek meaningful consensus while recognizing their shared contexts, their profoundly pluralistic existence, and their ecologically mediated identities.

Third, the practice of utopian thinking. This is about radical imaginaries which are not descriptions of the future but orientations in the present, points of entry, beginnings and departures, exits, but not final destinations. This is critical consciousness and creative imaginations that are iterative, formative, informative, and transformative.

Fourth, the practice of truthfulness. More than demonstrated factual/counterfactual correspondence or coherence to some a priori "logos," truth is about disclosure—of bringing into presence or understanding the world in which human beings dwell. It is a process of differentiation and formation that "maintains a crucial reference to the world's horizon as a space of human relations…of meaning held in common…of signification or possible signification."[1]

Educational Tasks

Global solidarity requires educational tasks that are hospitable to peace, justice, and sustainability with the sense of a shared future(s).

First, the task of embracing and experiencing a continually changing world. This is simply a reiteration of the necessity of solidarity being thoroughly embedded and oriented to historical, political, cultural contexts and locations.

Second, the task of cultivating critical and engaged pedagogies that are embodied as an ecological biosphere. Solidarity is about the discovery, creation, and nurture of creative and critical

consciousness, that includes thinking, feeling, acting in the midst of struggles and transgressions to create just, participatory, and sustainable societies aspiring to the global.[2]

Third, the task of redefining institutions as a (local, regional, and global) ecological system. Not unlike communities in which they are embedded, institutions are more than administrative apparatuses. They are also a confluence of (re)sources of food, water, livelihood, energy, friends, ideas, recreation, sacred inspiration—as well as economic, political, cultural interests and passionate dispositions. In short, global solidarity is a biosphere that aspires to sustainability, creativity, and critical/corporeal being.[3]

Global Solidarity as Effective Partnerships

Finally, global solidarity, particularly for peace, justice, and sustainability, is fundamentally about "effective partnerships": those practices that are animated by and enhance at the broadest levels, mutuality and collegiality, shared responsibility, accountability, transparency, and decision-making among partners at whatever level or kind, and that have clearly agreed upon purposes that empower and transform those in the partnerships, and which are contextualized, sustainable, useful, and attainable.

Effective partnerships include those practices that emphasize the desirability of multilateral, multilayered, and multi-perspectival strategies, and voices that (1) seriously attend to the intersectionalities of the issues related to global solidarity; (2) broaden and deepen collaborations, particularly in terms of inclusion, plurality, and difference; and (3) are intentionally sensitive to the nuances and specificities of asymmetrical space, time, and place. Effective partnerships are those practices that are marked by interdependence and relative autonomy in global North-South relationships, that empower those involved in the partnership, that flatten power differentials that arise out of the unevenness of human, financial, and physical resources, and of history and location.

Global solidarity in the service of peace, justice, and sustainability with a sense of a shared future(s) is the creation of the fundamentally new that is also fundamentally better.

Endnotes

1. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World, or Globalization* (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 2007), 333–35.

2. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1994).

3. Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Ossining, NY: Orbis Books, 1997).

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The Power of Translocal Organizing

Jackie Smith

Richard Falk's focus on imagination as the key to global solidarity resonates with work happening in social movements everywhere. Social hierarchies and the divisions they create are at the core of global capitalism, and they are ingrained in our very understandings of identities, cultural histories, and institutions. We need a sociological imagination to understand how powerful groups create and manipulate social divisions so that we can invent pathways towards a more livable, cohesive world. In other words, we need political and legal imagination aimed at transforming the basic institutions of our societies, including schools, media, legal systems, and government. The often overlooked struggles of people around the world provide important knowledge of the "politics of impossibility" required to build the world we need.

A promising path to global solidarity known as "translocalism" characterizes many of today's struggles for rights and democracy. Translocalism refers to relationships across locales designed to "create new spaces of agency and overcome the constraints posed by a nation-state bounded view. . . .[T]hey both transgress and transcend locality and have the ability to change the local spaces from which they emerge."[1] Translocality distinguishes the identities of people and communities from nation-states, enabling new social and ecological relationships and bases of authority. It helps shift attention from global to local scales, where human and ecological relationships are more visible and valued. Significantly, it is a practice developed through struggle, as people have learned to work across social divisions to build unity and advance shared goals.

Translocal connections that link particular places within global social webs thus enable people to reimagine citizenship and other dimensions of identity. "Placemaking" practices nurture local

identities and allegiances to ecosystems and communities. They challenge the globalization project's ongoing, forced displacement of people and non-human species and enable people to reimagine and defend their relationships to local communities and the land.

Social movement projects such as municipalism, right to the city movements, and transition towns all demonstrate models for organizing communities in ways that help people reimagine local identities and relationships and redefine their role in governing their communities. They build community control over economic and social practices that most directly impact people's livelihoods, and in doing so help expand the spaces of political life. By centering place and relationships within and beyond particular communities, they help build more inclusive, intersectional politics and foster social cohesion, countering today's dangerously polarized politics of resentment and exclusion.

Translocal practices offer an alternative paradigm—or "social operating system"—from that of globalized capitalism, one that imagines elements of a solidarity-supporting system. This paradigm prioritizes human rights and care over economic growth, interdependent over extractive relationships with the planet, cooperation over competition, knowledge ecologies over hegemonic Western science, long- over short-term, communities over individualism, and local over global scales (See chart). Using various strategies and organizational forms, they encourage the reimagining and *decolonization* of thinking as well as institutions and practices as a prerequisite for global solidarity.

Social movements have long promoted alternative ways of organizing global social relations, enacting what I've called a "human rights globalization" project.[2] Collecting observations about how people in diverse places around the world have responded to the disruptions and violence of capitalist globalization, we see remarkable similarities in the discourses and character of struggles. A desire for global and local societies that enable community control of land and supportive ecosystems, dignified and sustainable livelihoods, and social relations based on care and reciprocity are among key features of this emergent global project. Movements are also generating and popularizing transformative, intersectional identities based in non-hierarchical and ecologically grounded social relations. Drawing from this long history, I highlight a few contemporary examples.

Today's struggles for collective human rights of indigenous peoples, peasants, women, and people of African descent are all significant in that they articulate transversal identities that help unite people beyond nation states while engaging them in formal inter-state political processes. The Permanent Forum of Indigenous Peoples and the process advancing a similar forum for People of African Descent, UN Women, and UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants have created global spaces where identities that transcend and challenge existing state power are deepening and impacting both global and local spaces. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights—established in 1993 after decades of movement pressure—has strengthened institutional arrangements that bring people together across national borders and hold even powerful governments more accountable to global human rights standards. Ongoing engagement of social movements with this process has, in turn, generated new spaces for reimagining identities and promoting global solidarity.

Efforts to "bring human rights home" and make international law more meaningful for people's lives have encouraged the translocalization of human rights struggles, generating projects that expand *political and legal imaginations* and challenge prevailing power structures. For instance, the World Conference Against Racism helped forge global movement unity and generate more cohesive global pressure on governments to tackle structural racism and its effects. Translocal movement pressure led to a recent seminal UN report on systemic racism that was remarkably blunt in its condemnations of institutionalized racism and called for all governments to accelerate progress towards "transformative" and "comprehensive" changes, including reparations. Such work helps hold violators of rights—including institutions and systems—accountable and builds power and agency for marginalized local groups and global unity against right-wing and white supremacist movements.

Other examples of legal imagination include Stop Ecocide's campaign supporting the legal rights of nature by making ecocide a crime. The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty models other initiatives to mobilize municipalities to implement global treaties, including the Cities for CEDAW (Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) campaign and UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities initiative. Communities recognize that they don't need to wait for political leadership from the national level to align their communities with the global human rights community. People's tribunals and efforts to create councils on future generations in local

and national governments can highlight the urgency of today's social and ecological crises and promote more imagination in transformative problem-solving.

Complementing these efforts at the local level are social movement initiatives aimed at rolling back corporate power and supporting the democratization of national and local political institutions. This work is essential to making necessary changes possible. Neoliberal globalization and corporate growth have done great damage to our democracies, and local initiatives calling for greater transparency and public engagement in local policies from budgeting to policing to housing and economic development are essential for both ensuring people's basic needs, addressing climate change, and preventing the further escalation of violence and polarization. Initiatives to advance a global treaty on corporations and human rights, promote regulation and equity in global media and communications systems, and further other policies and institutions that rein in corporate power are all critical elements of work to build the world we need.

In sum, social movements working across locales are generating blueprints for a better world. What is needed is more people working to reimagine their own possible supportive roles improving, adapting, and advancing these. By converging translocally around new social, political, and legal imaginaries, global solidarity is possible!

Endnotes

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Reclaiming Utopia

Biljana Vankovska

To envision a better world of tomorrow calls for great courage because the dominant paradigm reads There Is No Alternative. Or, to quote the Borg from the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* series, "Resistance is futile!" It is how the imagination of another now (to refer to Yanis Varoufakis's book) is kept imprisoned. The aim is to silence and discourage all thoughtful, rebellious, and critical minds (and groups). Critique is tolerated if it is not too radical (i.e., does not go deep to the root causes of the present inequalities and suffering) and if it comes mostly from the Western ("more civilized") part of the world.

We, the people from the Global South, however, have much to say about the past, present, and future of this world. And most of all, about the lack of global solidarity—since we are on the "recipient side" of the crumbs of charity, assistance, and empathy. Strangely, even we who used to live in an acting utopia of former Yugoslavia have almost forgotten the unique experiences of socialism with a human face, non-aligned foreign policy, self-management, and the culture of peace with which we grew up. The free and universal health care (along with free and accessible education and retirement system) was based on the solidarity principle. Even the traces in today's intrinsic solidarity with the Palestinians, Iraqis, or any other oppressed groups comes from the old school system based on values of non-enmity, antimilitarism, global solidarity, and belief in international law.

Yugoslavia was far from a perfect country, yet it was the closest realization of the ideals of the Paris Commune. The Yugoslav leadership and population did not fear to think beyond the two dominant mantras of Western capitalism and individualism and Eastern state socialism and collectivism. The peace researcher Hakan Wiberg once compared Yugoslavia (with its internal diversities and contradictions) to a flawed butterfly that was not meant to fly but, not knowing

that, flew for several decades. The successor states almost overnight embraced the TINA principle and sought to make any past achievement and legacy obsolete and non-inspirational. The so-called international community has been insisting on the heavy feeling of guilt, shame, and self-blame for the bloody conflicts of the 1990s. Instead of imprisoned imagination, here one can talk of killed imagination (and utopia).

For many of us, it is of utmost importance to evoke Karl Marx's warning from 1852: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living." We gave up the positive and even heroic achievements of our predecessors, and instead embraced the traditions of the past generations in the West as guidance for the allegedly inevitable (bright!) future. Instead of seeking friends and showing empathy and solidarity with the ones who are in a more miserable position, we have been confronted with (newly invented) enemies at home and abroad, take part in imperial endeavors of our new colonial masters, and teach our children that war is peace and peace is war.

Self-management (in economic, political, and societal terms) used to be a school of participatory democracy and mutual solidarity among the members of the community/communities of Yugoslavia and with the wider world. Egoism, competition, and self-interests are the driving forces for the new generation of "entrepreneurs." How to work subversively, especially from within academia, is the challenge I face every day. Planting the seeds of critical thinking and dissent is essential, and yet possible: step by step, day by day, patiently and stubbornly against the mainstream. Without personal freedom and self-awareness of the pandemic of inequality that has long preceded the COVID-19 pandemic, there can be no collective action toward a common goal and global solidarity.

The promotion of various forms of global solidarity is a luxury of rare (yet courageous) people able and free enough to work on the global cause. One should not disregard and disrespect much less significant efforts on a micro level that take place every day. Solidarity grows from within small communities, and only then expand and embrace wider spaces of our Earthland. But those small heroes often need moral and intellectual support. The resistance against social injustices is well-

alive despite the grim general picture of the world, but it lives in small pockets of society. It calls for a trigger to be awakened—such as mass tragedies and misfortunes. Even the once war-ravaged part of former Yugoslavia still has the potential to provide for an outburst of mass solidarity in a time of need (be they floods, earthquakes, etc.). Bearing in mind that all these "natural catastrophes" are in essence a result of social decay and structural violence embedded in unjust and repressive institutional arrangements, this is obviously not enough. Solidarity could be sustainable only if institutionalized and yet not alienated from the people the system should serve.

In April 2020, Arundhati Roy hoped that the pandemic was a portal, i.e., a gateway between one world and the next. Indeed, the world is changing even faster than we thought, but there is no guarantee that the results will be positive. The COVID-19 pandemic is just a test for everything else: if we manage to disempower Big Pharma, then anything else will be possible. Our common struggle for a better world should be carried out on many levels and in many forms. Obviously, this is (again) a time of monsters, and we need to synthesize the feelings of pessimism and optimism, and to transcend them in a Gramscian way: while our minds may be pessimistic, we should mobilize as many people with strong and optimistic wills as possible.

What should be our common and most urgent goals in this endeavor? Palestine and the pandemic management come first to mind: these urgent affairs combine the local with the planetary! Ending Israeli apartheid and making COVID-19 vaccines (and eventually cures) a global public good. The next step should be universal health care, along with the universal basic income. Global civil society (not the one deliberatively created and funded by power centers in order to promote the liberal agenda or even the status quo) must reclaim its independence from any limitations imposed by geopolitical "realism." Free market, neoliberal status quo, and militaristic interventionism "for the sake of humanitarianism" or R2P are not outcomes of any natural laws; they are all man-made and their sustainability depend inter alia on current hegemony of knowledge.

Let's reimagine and adopt a sense of possibility because There Are Thousands of Alternatives (TATA) should be our guiding star. By labeling something as utopia we immediately give up the sense of possible-ism. We have no other choice but to embark on the path fueled by necessity and desire, without being ashamed by our inherent need to dream and work for a better world. While being

guided by TATA principle, there is just one thing we are not allowed to disregard: the bio-political imperatives that imperil human survival and ecological balance call for unprecedented cooperative energies turned loose.

About the Author

Biljana Vankovska is Professor of International Relations and Peace Studies at Saints Cyril and Methodius University. She has been a pioneer in peace and conflict studies in Macedonia. Vankovska has been a Guest Senior Research Fellow at Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI), a faculty member at European Peace University in Stadschlaining, and a Senior Fellow at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). She is an International Advisor of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Studies (TFF) in Lund. She holds PhD in philosophy from Saints Cyril and Methodius University.

The Inspiring Legacy of Global Movements

Lawrence Wittner

Richard Falk's beautifully crafted article provides a sophisticated overview of the need to push beyond the current limits of imagination and politics to foster solidarity beyond the state.

Even so, the article does not get down to the specifics of how that might be achieved or, for that matter, how it has already, to a modest extent, been accomplished.

Social movements have managed, to an extraordinary degree, to form global networks of activists who have transcended nationalism in their ideas and behavior. Since the nineteenth century, there has been a remarkable efflorescence of these movements: the antislavery movement, the labor movement, the socialist movement, the peace movement, and the women's rights movement, among others. In recent decades, other global movements have emerged, preaching and embodying the same kind of human solidarity—from the environmental movement, to the nuclear disarmament movement, to the movement against corporate globalization, to the racial justice movement.

Although divided from one another, at times, by their parochial concerns, they have nevertheless been profoundly subversive of established ideas and of the established order, which have been largely devoted to maintenance of the nation-state system and special privilege. For this reason, these social movements have usually triggered a furious backlash from the political Right.

The rise of globally based social movements appears to have developed out of the growing interconnection of nations, economies, and peoples spawned by increasing world economic and technological development, trade, travel, and communications. This interconnection has meant that war, economic collapse, climate disasters, diseases, corporate exploitation, and

other problems are no longer local, but global. And the solutions, of course, must also be global in nature. Meanwhile, the possibilities for alliances of like-minded people across national boundaries have also grown.

The worldwide campaign for nuclear disarmament, the movement which I have studied most closely, had little choice but to develop on a global basis, for nuclear weapons represented a global problem that could not be tackled on a national basis. To be sure, one wing of the movement, led by Communist parties, did emphasize a national solution—nuclear disarmament by the United States, but not by the Soviet Union. Eventually, however, this one-sided approach to the nuclear menace was marginalized, and a true peoples' alliance emerged, uniting nonaligned activists in East and West against the genocidal nuclear war plans of their governments.

Much the same is true of other global social movements. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, for example, play no favorites among nations when they report on human rights abuses around the world. Individual nations, of course, selectively pick through the findings of these organizations to label their political adversaries (though not their allies) ruthless human rights abusers. But the underlying reality is that participants in these movements have broken free of allegiances to national governments to become genuine world citizens. The same can be said of activists in climate organizations like Greenpeace and 350.org, anti-corporate campaigns, the women's rights movement, and most other global social movements.

Institutions of global governance also foster human solidarity. Although this contention might appear to reverse causality, the fact is that the existence of global institutions normalizes the idea that people in diverse countries are part of the human community and, therefore, have a responsibility to one another. Furthermore, UN Secretaries-General have often served as voices of conscience to the world, deploring warfare, economic inequality, runaway climate disaster, and a host of other global ills. In recent years, portions of the political Left seem to have forgotten how global institutions generate global solidarity, both in ideas and behavior. But the political Right has not, and acts whenever it can to undermine the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, the World Health Organization, and other global institutions.

Indeed, social movements and institutions of global governance often have a symbiotic relationship. The United Nations has provided a very useful locus for discussion and action on issues of concern to organizations dealing with women's rights, environmental preservation, human rights, disarmament, and other causes, with frequent conferences on these issues. Frustrated with the failure of the nuclear powers to divest themselves of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament organizations deftly used a series of UN conferences to push through the adoption of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, much to the horror of nuclear-armed nations.

Admittedly, the United Nations is a confederation of nations, where the "great powers" often use their disproportionate influence—for example, in the Security Council—to block the adoption of humane, global measures that they consider against their "interests." But it remains possible to change the rules for the world body, diminishing great power influence and creating a more democratic, effective world federation of nations. Not surprisingly, there are social movements, such as the World Federalist Movement/Institute for Global Policy, working along these lines. Other global social movements and proponents of global solidarity would be well-served by supporting this campaign.

Although there are no guarantees that social movements and global governance will triumph over the predatory forces that currently dominate the world, we shouldn't ignore them either. Indeed, they can provide us with at least a measure of hope that, someday, global solidarity will prevail.

About the Author

Lawrence Wittner is Emeritus Professor of History at the State University of New York at Albany. He has written many books, including *Rebels against War*, *The Biographical Dictionary of Modern Peace Leaders*, *Peace Action*, *Working for Peace and Justice*, and the award-winning scholarly trilogy *The Struggle against the Bomb*. He has served as president of the Peace History Society and as convener of the Peace History Commission of the International Peace Research Association. He serves as co-chair of the national board of Peace Action, the largest grassroots peace organization in the United States. He holds a PhD in history from Columbia University.

Author's Response

Response to Comments

Richard Falk

I am dazzled, and somewhat overwhelmed, by the depth, sparkle, and diversity of the responses to my introductory essay. It is not possible for me to do justice to the many important lines of analysis, aspiration, and assessment set forth. My attempt here will be to identify those points that significantly challenge or elaborate upon my presentation of the basic problematique of human solidarity by reference to a few underlying questions:

--Why has the attainment of human solidarity of global scope, resting on cooperative problem-solving and policy formation, and embodying an emancipatory ethos become more necessary than ever in before in world history?

--Why are the obstacles to the formation of human solidarity at the global level so difficult to overcome?

--What are the most hopeful pathways to expanding human solidarity given the grim realities of the Anthropocene?

--Is there time to overcome and transform the obstacles so as to achieve the necessary and desired degree and orientation of human solidarity?

--Can human society act with sufficient resolve individually and collectively in these settings in view of the inherent uncertainties about future developments and in light of entrenched interests of various elites in retaining present political, economic, ecological, ethical, and cultural frameworks?

Filling Gaps and Acknowledging Deficiencies

Capitalism: For several respondents, including Biljana Vankovska, Valentine M. Moghadam,

Radmila Nakarada, and Akeel Bigrami, the decisive obstacle to achieving the desired and necessary degree of human solidarity at the global level was the obstructive impacts of capitalism. In particular, the disruptions of pre-modern community could be attributed to the ways in which market forces generated win/lose relations among individuals and societies, rewarding the pursuit of self-interest and promoting consumerism without the slightest regard for the public good. Such an atmosphere was not conducive to cooperation at any level beyond that of the state, and was even deficient with respect to the wellbeing of national citizenries, evidenced by unsustainable forms of inequality and massive displays of alienation.

There was some ambiguity throughout the discussion as to whether the root deficiency was capitalism, as such, or the current phase of capitalism, known as "neoliberal globalization" and characterized by the lack of a significant challenge from socialist values, the weakness of post-industrial organized labor, and a post-Cold War consensus that disseminates the view "there is not alternative" (TINA). The former Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso lamented publicly that neoliberal globalization is "the only game in town." China in particular has learned to play that game to perfection despite framing its approach misleadingly as "Socialism with Chinese characteristics."

We are left with haunting questions. Are there strong enough emergent social forces to reform capitalism so that it achieves social equity and ecological equilibrium? Will the degree of reform be sufficient, assuming it happens, to facilitate the global solidarity dimensions of the Great Transition?

Statist World Order: Other respondents, notably Luis Cabrera and Lawrence Wittner, argued that the most fundamental issue is the politics of fragmentation that results from the statist nature of world order, and its supporting notions of sovereignty, nationalism, and national security. From such perspectives, global solidarity on behalf of humane problem-solving will not be possible without a more centralized and robust normative and institutional architecture of global governance. Translated into more concrete ideas, this means respect for international law without the current right of exception claimed by leading states, given constitutional status in the UN Charter by granting the five prevailing powers in World War II permanent membership in the Security Council and a right of veto in the only UN body with the power of decision. In effect, for geopolitical actors, compliance with international law remains discretionary, and there is no pretense of accountability for wrongdoing.

Furthermore, it would require more capabilities and autonomy for international institutions to implement global solidarity imperatives in accordance with humane and ecologically responsive world order values.

Regressive Global Solidarity: New Fascisms: Some commenters remind us that global solidarity can also take a regressive turn toward fascism. The rise of autocratic leaders dedicated to chauvinistic forms of nationalism accentuates the current failures of ethical response by most states to the global migration crisis that is almost certain to become more severe in the years ahead as equatorial and coastal regions become uninhabitable, or nearly so, and hundreds of thousands of climate refugees roam the earth.

Responsible Ecocentricism: There were several respondents who felt that my advocacy of "responsible anthropocentrism" was deficient insofar as it failed to recognize the organic identity of the human species as ecologically bonded with the rest of nature, making human solidarity insufficiently radical if anthropocentrically conceived regardless of how responsible it purported to be. Upendra Baxi asserts our need to recognize and value our "companion species," and Alexander Lautensach proposed the ideal of "patriotism of Gaia" as preferable to my more modest plea for "a patriotism for humanity."

The reasoning behind such a rejection of anthropocentrism resonates, yet I am not persuaded. It strikes me as a characteristic of most forms of being even at the level of the gene or microbe that there is a selfish side of beingness that is stronger than either the altruistic or ecological side. The most that we can hope for as a species is to be responsible toward our future, which means to act as a guardian of nature and the earth based on implementing the precautionary principle with respect to ecological risk and the pleasure principle with regard to the preservation of the beauty, diversity, sociability, and sustainability of nature. In my usage, "responsible anthropocentrism" comprehends that human fulfillment arises from non-material sources, principal among which are love and spirituality, and that current manipulations of human wishes induces forms of consumerism and materialist indulgence that jeopardizes the ecological web on which all forms of life depend.

Identity: There were two persistent themes expressed on issues of identity. The first, explored deeply by Catherine Keller, Martha Van Der Bly, Jing Lin, and Charlene Spretnak, unsurprisingly all women, assert the need to get beyond the self/other or we/them dichotomies, and discover the wonders of relational thinking resting on I/thou interactions, in some cases drawing on religiously grounded ways of being and knowing. The second theme, articulated by Michael Karlberg, Michael Narberhaus, and David Featherstone (among others), is somewhat more cautious and conventional and insists that global solidarity will encounter resistance if it does not preserve the nested solidarities of family, neighborhood, and nation.

Social Movements: Several contributors to the discussion, including Jeremy Brecher, Jackie Smith, Valentine M. Moghadam, Francine Mestrum, and Lawrence Wittner called attention to the relevance of past transnational social movements that exhibit a global orientation. Such movements involving labor conditions, human rights, environment, and disarmament have emphasized civil society impulses to circumvent the nationalist privileging of state boundaries—a defining feature of modernity—in pursuing goals based on humanistic, and more recently ecological, values. What we can learn from such experience—its limitations as well as its successes—is of relevance to the current struggle to achieve the more ambitious forms of global solidarity embedded in the Great Transition worldview, which Brecher believes will happen only as a result of what he calls "a global nonviolent insurrection" by people against those governing elites currently exerting dystopian forms of control.

Conclusion

I am mindful of many other motifs explored in the discussion. We are, at once warned that "the worse is yet to come" while Lester Edwin J. Ruiz reassures us about an imminent "sense of wholeness" will give rise to "a culture of dwelling not possession." Let me end with the "realistic" hopelessness of David Barash set off against the more biopolitical confidence expressed with premodern animistic verve by Zillah Eisenstein: "Global solidarity is coming because the planet requires it." Such an implicit comprehensive dialogue among likeminded participants reminds us of both hopeful pathways and formidable obstacles exhibited by the apocalyptic and emancipatory uncertainties pervading the future of the human condition at this juncture of planetary history.